

Health Care Response /COVID-19 Minnesota Fund Request Form

Please complete this form in accordance with the instructions

Agency/Program/Activity:

Department of Human Services

Title of Request: Isolation Space for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Date: 5/8/2020

Amount Requested: \$ 7,200,000

Request Funding Source:



Health Care Response Fund Request



COVID-19 Minnesota Fund Request

Brief Summary of Request:

Summary must be complete on this page with supporting information attached.

Recommendation: Appropriate \$7.2 million to the Department of Human Services to establish isolation spaces for people experiencing homelessness who are symptomatic or COVID-19 positive. County and Tribal governments would be eligible if (a) they either have established safe spaces for everyone experiencing homelessness who are at highest risk for severe COVID-19 illness, or 100 or more safe spaces, whichever is fewer, and (b) have at least one test-confirmed COVID-19 case among those experiencing homelessness. Funds will be used to cover leasing or rental of appropriate spaces, food, staffing including mobile behavioral health teams, and necessary personal protective equipment (PPE). DHS's distribution and management of these funds will be designed to maximize FEMA reimbursement for eligible expenses. The proposal includes two staff who will manage the distribution of these funds and the process for requesting FEMA reimbursement on eligible costs.

Rationale: Isolation spaces are needed for people experiencing homelessness who are symptomatic or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19, who do not require hospitalization. Since people experiencing homelessness cannot isolate at home during their illness, such spaces are critical to minimize transmission and address the health needs of people who become ill. Lack of access to appropriate isolation space undermines major state efforts to test and trace COVID-19 positive individuals. The Legislature recently appropriated \$15.206 million for the purpose of providing additional shelter options that promote health and safety. All of those funds have been expended or encumbered.

The total need for isolation space in Minnesota exceeds \$7.2 million. However, this proposal would support an initial effort to build capacity in targeted regions of the state and inform future isolation strategies. This proposal would fund the creation of an average of 730 isolation spaces for 45 days. Assuming an average isolation stay of 14 days, that translates to approximately 2,300 individuals served. Actual use of these funds is expected to ramp up as the number of COVID-19 cases among people experiencing homelessness grows and may be used in a variety of settings. The estimated costs per space are based on actual expenditures incurred to date by local governments.

While communities have created isolation spaces, some have expressed concerned about their resources and capacity to fully meet the demand needed. Many costs are anticipated to be eligible for reimbursement by FEMA at 75% federal share. However, local governments lack the resources to provide upfront funding for the initiative necessary to draw down federal reimbursement. Ensuring people who are experiencing homelessness can safely isolate has significant equity impacts, as there are significant racial and ethnic disparities in those who experience homelessness.

Jodi Harpstead

Department Head Signature

Digitally signed by Jodi Harpstead
Date: 2020.05.08 18:12:37 -05'00'

5/8/2020

Date