

CE Policy and Procedure Addendum for COVID Response

Approved by the board: June 2020

In response to COVID-19, NY-508 Continuum of Care (Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans and Wyoming Counties) has updated and changed some of its Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures to position the system to respond to the COVID-19 public health crisis. This CE Policies and Procedures addendum (“the addendum”) reflects those updates made to date and the date they are currently planned to expire. Please note, this is a constantly evolving crisis and response so dates and policies are subject to change as the CoC continues to refine its COVID-19 response. Wherever applicable, the addendum supersedes the currently adopted CE Policy and Procedure for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis within NY-508 CoC, which is the timeframe during which this addendum is intended to be in effect.

The HUD CARES Act has provided our communities in Erie and Niagara counties with \$6,178,586 (first allocation, total two allocations) of ESG funding that will be allocated towards keeping those who are experiencing homelessness safe through accessible housing during the global pandemic. As a result, we will be able to serve and house clients at a much faster rate than before, though it remains our mission to serve those who are most in need first.

Accessing shelters:

Shelter:

Within Erie County, if a person has tested positive for COVID-19, and in need of shelter, they will be placed in a Department of Health funded motel. This can be requested through the Department of Social Service or through calling 211.

Additional shelter has been in place in Buffalo:

Effective 3/29/2020, the County of Erie in collaboration with the City of Buffalo and local providers established a 24/7 shelter facility at ECC Flickinger Athletic Center (The Flick). Restoration Society, Inc. (RSI) will serve as the pass through for funds through an amended contract with the City of Buffalo. RSI will function as the lead organization in the management and oversight of the Shelter. The Flick is set up to shelter 85 guests, with a maximum of 100 guests, following CDC recommended guidelines for social distancing.

The Flick will operate 24/7 with three (3) eight hour shifts daily. Each shift will be staffed with 3-4 individuals. Erie County is providing law enforcement services 8pm-8am through Erie County Sheriff's Office. Contracted, private security will be onsite 24/7 to work with Code 19 staff in managing guest relations, incident management and de-escalation strategies. Meals will be provided to guests 3 times daily. Guests will have access to shower facilities following strict guidelines for social distancing, limiting the number of guests using the shower facility at a time.

Several behavioral health and homeless services will occur on site. The list of services and availability of providers is subject to change. Services include, but not limited to, Coordinated Entry, Tele-Health and Tele-Mental Health, Mobile Services, physical health screenings.

Transitional Housing, Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing priority:

The current priorities were determined based on the Vulnerability Index and length of time homelessness. During the effectiveness of this addendum, households with a person who is 65+ or people of all age with an underlying medical condition, per CDC (when information is available) will act as a tiebreaker to current prioritization for CoC and ESG funded PSH/regular RRH.

Changing decision making structure:

In order to quickly respond to the crisis related to COVID, a COVID- ad hoc team will be created in Niagara and Erie counties once ESG funds are allocated. This team will include HAWNY staff, shelter, DSS, ESG recipient and subrecipient, outreach programs, and possible current and previous program participants in order to evaluate and make recommendations on prioritizing clients the use of the CARES fund.

Any decision the COVID-ad hoc team makes will be communicated with the impacted providers via email and implemented immediately. The implementation plan will be reviewed by the CE Oversight Committee and if needed, the CoC board has the authority to approve, reject, modify and request additional information before giving their final approval..

Mission of the COVID-ad hoc committee:

- Create effective interventions for different subpopulations based on vulnerability to public health outbreaks and the economic hardship it creates
- Actively evaluate policies and procedures affecting access and interventions for different subpopulations based on vulnerability to public health outbreaks.
- Create values to specifically address your community's immediate needs and guide decisions
- Simplify the criteria to quickly assess people

Further guidance could be found Homeless System Response: [Changes to Coordinated Entry Prioritization to Support and Respond to COVID-19](#)