

The Province is moving people living in unsafe and crowded conditions at Oppenheimer Park in Vancouver as well as Pandora Avenue and Topaz Park in Victoria into temporary housing. This is in response to the current COVID-19 crisis. This first step enables people living on the streets and in the parks to sleep in a safe place, have their own showers and sinks, and access the supports they need.

BC Housing is working with our government and non-profit partners to provide a temporary safe space for people living in the encampments. This is an interim step as we take steps to make long-term housing available.

### ***What is happening?***

- The Province has made an order under the Emergency Program Act. The camps at Oppenheimer Park, Pandora Street and Topaz Park will be closed.
- BC Housing is working with local municipalities and our non-profit partners to help people living in the parks move into spaces indoors for the next few months. Once permanent homes with supports are available, people will be moved to those homes.

### ***What will happen to the people living in the parks?***

- An outreach worker will talk with each person to understand what they need.
- We will work with each person to find them housing that best meets their social and health needs.
- Once we offer someone housing and they accept it, we will help them pack and move to their new temporary home.

### ***How do people in the camps get access to the new spaces?***

- Outreach workers will talk with each person to match them with the accommodation that best meets their needs.
- We will make every effort to support each person. For example, we will try to keep self-identified families together and to provide options for people with pets. We will also have specific options for women, trans people, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, and racialized people.
- BC Housing will work with our partners to have a mix of different people at each building, and to provide them with the right kinds of supports to live there.

### ***Will people be forced to move?***

- Each person has the right to choose whether to accept or decline the housing we offer.
- We recognize many people living on the streets and in the parks have experienced trauma and have their own housing and social needs.
- Outreach workers will work closely with each person to find options that meet their needs.
- However, staying at the camp will not be an option after mid May.

### ***What if someone is not on the waitlist and is not living in one of the parks? Can they be considered?***

- Yes, we will be accepting applications through the Supportive Housing Registry and will have outreach workers available to assist and discuss housing needs.
- If someone needs housing, they should contact:
  - Vancouver:
    - Applicant inquiries can be directed to [orangehall@bchousing.org](mailto:orangehall@bchousing.org)
    - Applications can be dropped off at Orange Hall at **297 East Hastings Street** from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
  - Victoria:
    - Applicant inquiries can be directed to [vanislandregion@bchousing.org](mailto:vanislandregion@bchousing.org)

### ***What supports will be available for people?***

- Non-profit operators with experience supporting vulnerable people will be managing the temporary housing.
- Staff will be onsite to support residents 24/7.
- Residents will have access to daily meals, cleaning services and medical care.

### ***What will happen to people over the long term?***

- The hotels and community centres are an interim solution to reduce homelessness until more permanent housing solutions can be made available.
- BC Housing is working with all our partners to ensure anyone moving from the camps is offered housing options now and over the longer term. We do not want to see anyone forced back into homelessness.
- BC Housing recognizes there is an urgent need and we are working with local municipalities, health authorities and non-profit partners to develop permanent supportive housing.

### ***Are we moving everyone from the camps into the same hotel?***

- No. BC Housing will work with our partners to have a mix of different people at each building, and to provide them with the right kinds of supports to live there.
- We recognize each person has different housing needs. One solution will not work for everyone.

### ***What is being done to ensure the staff, residents and neighbours are protected?***

We are following Public Health guidance to reduce potential exposure to the virus and ensure protocols are in place to protect residents, non-profit and hotel staff, and the local neighbours, including:

- Every operator follows BC Centre for Disease Control and health authority direction in terms of self-isolation and visitor policies at their buildings.
- Non-profit staff are available to support residents in following isolation protocols.
- Staff monitor who goes in and out of these locations.
- Staff are provided with personal protective equipment and follow health guidelines around regular handwashing and physical distancing.

These hotels are being rented on a temporary basis. As part of the contract, BC Housing has committed to professional and rigorous cleaning of all buildings prior to handing them back over to the owner.

***What if I have more questions?***

Please send them to BC Housing at [communityrelations@bchousing.org](mailto:communityrelations@bchousing.org).