

Frequently Asked Questions: Hotel and Motel Owners April 27, 2020

Overview

Project Roomkey is a collaborative effort by the State, County and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to secure hotel and motel rooms for vulnerable people experiencing homelessness. It provides a way for people who don't have a home to stay inside to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Project Roomkey aims to not only protect high-risk individuals, but to also prevent the spread of the deadly virus in our communities and protect the capacity of our hospitals and healthcare system by providing a place for individuals to safely isolate.

In this period of economic downturn and unemployment, Project Roomkey is also helping keep local businesses open and members of our community employed.

Why should I participate in Project Room Key?

Project Room Key is an opportunity for the hospitality industry to step up and save lives. Recognizing how hard the crisis has been for this sector, the program also offers economic relief for the hotels and motels that participate through these business transactions. We see your voluntary participation in the program as an opportunity for benefits to both your business and public health. We want to support you, so you can support us.

What are the business terms?

The County will enter into an Operating Agreement with your hotel or motel for a 90-day period, with options to extend. The County will pay your hotel or motel a reasonable, agreed-to daily rate based on actual occupancy at the site. At the end of the term of the Agreement, the County will return the property to you in the condition in which it was received.

The hotel or motel will provide the following services, among others:

- Standard housekeeping and janitorial services
- Check-in / desk service

How many hotel and motel rooms are a part of Project Roomkey?

For up-to-date information on the number of hotels/motels participating in Project Roomkey and the number of rooms secured, please visit:

<https://covid19.lacounty.gov/incident-updates/>

Project Roomkey Clients

Who will be staying at the hotels and motels?

Hotel and motel rooms will provide temporary housing for people experiencing homelessness who are not COVID-19 positive or symptomatic, but are vulnerable to complications should they become infected with COVID-19. To participate in Project Roomkey, individuals must be 65 years of age or older, or have underlying medical conditions, or be medically compromised. This group of people is significantly more likely to need hospitalization and require critical care if infected with COVID-19. That increase in infection would severely impact our healthcare system.

To participate in Project Roomkey, clients must be referred to the program by a homeless services provider, health care provider, law enforcement, or other service provider.

How are the clients assigned to Project Roomkey hotels and motels?

Homeless services providers, working in the communities they serve, are first identifying eligible clients who are already in the city where the Project Roomkey site is opening. After that, the focus is to identify clients in cities or unincorporated areas surrounding the Project Roomkey site. Once those clients are identified, the focus broadens to include clients throughout the Service Planning Area (SPA) in which the site is located.

Can people walk up and ask for a room?

No. The address of each Project Roomkey site is confidential. Only people who meet the requirements and are referred through appropriate channels can participate. Project Roomkey sites are not walk-up facilities.

Will participants be able to bring their belongings into the sites with them?

Clients are allowed to bring in their belongings. LAHSA and case management staff work closely with people to identify the belongings they would like to keep and any belongings they would like to dispose of.

At the end of the pandemic, what will happen to the clients of the hotels and motels?

LAHSA, the County, and partners from the non-profit and philanthropy sectors are working together to develop a comprehensive plan for those who receive temporary assistance under Project Roomkey, so that they do not return to the streets once the COVID-19 crisis comes to an end.

While clients are staying at these hotels and motels, on-site service providers are working with each client individually to develop an exit plan, with the goal of moving them to a situation that permanently resolves their homelessness. In cases where this isn't feasible, LAHSA will use existing shelter capacity to move people into an interim housing environment or explore other options.

Hotel and Motel Sites

How does the County identify hotel/motel site locations?

Los Angeles County aims to open Project Roomkey sites throughout the County and the Service Planning Areas (SPAs) to account for need based on the 2019 Point in Time homeless Count.

State, County, and private sector real estate experts are working with local hoteliers to determine interest in the program. Through Project Roomkey, business owners can support their enterprise and their employees.

The County has also partnered with hotel associations to identify sites that meet Project Roomkey's operational needs. Hundreds of properties have been explored and contacted.

What is the difference between the County's medical sheltering sites and Project Roomkey sites?

Los Angeles County is working on a separate, but parallel program to use hotels and motels throughout the County to temporarily house individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 and cannot isolate or quarantine in their own home. This program serves anyone in need of an isolation or quarantine site, which can include, but is not limited to people experiencing homelessness. First responders and medical personnel have been quarantined and isolated in medical sheltering sites provided by the County.

How long will a hotel or motel be part of Project Roomkey?

Project Roomkey is a temporary program to provide life-saving, temporary housing for the most vulnerable people who are experiencing homelessness. The County will enter

into an occupancy agreement with a hotel or motel for a three-month period, with options to extend during the pandemic.

Operations

Is there security on site?

Yes, private security will be on site, 24/7, at each Project Roomkey site.

How are Project Roomkey sites staffed?

Every Project Roomkey site is staffed 24/7. Staffing at the Project Roomkey sites consists of:

- LA County Fire – Shelter/Site Manager
- Homeless Service Provider – Client Services Managers and Case Manager
- LAHSA staff
- County and city Disaster Service Workers
- Nursing Staff
- 24/7 private Security

Staff monitors guest behavior to ensure program rules are followed, provides daily health and wellness checks of guests, delivers food to clients' rooms and responds to client needs.

Are there rules for clients residing at the site? How will they be enforced?

LAHSA has established a code of conduct for clients at the Project Roomkey sites, which outlines expectations for those participating in the program. Service providers explain the code of conduct to clients upon entry into the program and remind them of its provisions over the course of their stay.

While at the hotels and motels, all clients are educated about appropriate social distancing practices, handwashing, and face coverings. Clients are not permitted to congregate in common areas.

The County has contracted with a private security firm to deploy security guards on site 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Security is meant to ensure the safety of everyone on site. At least one professional security guard is present for every 50 rooms.

Can clients in Project Roomkey sites leave the hotel or motel?

Just like all the residents of Los Angeles County, Project Roomkey clients must adhere to physical distancing and Safer At Home guidelines, which means they can only leave the site for essential services. Services, including three meals a day and medical

monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms are provided on site. Clients are issued an ID and no guests are allowed on site.

What procedures are in place in the event that one of the clients ends up being COVID-19 positive?

Clients are screened for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entering the hotel. After intake, clients and staff are screened for symptoms and have their temperature checked a minimum of two times per day. If a client begins to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19, site staff will activate emergency protocols, contact the Department of Public Health (DPH) and transfer the client to the appropriate location for further care. The County will ensure the appropriate deep cleaning process occurs if a client is found to have tested positive.

What happens if there is damage to a room or hotel/motel property?

The County will be responsible for the cost to repair damage to the room or site property caused by guests, the County or its vendors.

How will Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) be paid?

The County will be responsible for the cost of any Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) charged to the hotel.

Where can I get more information?

For the most up-to-date information on the County's efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through Project Roomkey, visit covid19.lacounty.gov/project-roomkey