



Emergency Shelter Task Force Preliminary Recommendations September 16, 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Emergency Shelter Task Force (Task Force) convened at the request of the Anchorage Assembly pursuant to AR 2022-252 to locate possible options for winter emergency sheltering (October – April) and to respond to the imminent closure of Centennial Campground scheduled for September 30, 2022. Due to the urgency for immediate decisions and action, the Task Force agreed to issue preliminary recommendations that could be implemented by September 30, 2022.¹

As has been the case in prior years, there are no immediately available easy solutions. The locations that are most suitable for emergency shelter and immediately available are MOA owned facilities and all present some level of community impact and/or public protest. However, it is the recommendation of the Task Force that the locations with immediate availability that pose the least community impact are the Golden Lion and the Dempsey Ice Arena. There is also the potential for existing shelter providers (Covenant House, Beans Café, Brother Francis) to increase existing capacity if funding is quickly made available. The Task Force recommends that these recommended options be exercised as quickly as possible and simultaneously and that the MOA work expeditiously to provide funding to support expanded capacity by existing shelter operators with proven positive performance.

There are additional commercial properties, some hotels and a non-profit location that have the potential to be turned on for emergency shelter in approximately 90 days and to add to or replace the emergency shelter capacity at the Dempsey Ice Arena depending on utilization and need. These locations all need additional investigation and owner discussions that make them not feasible for immediate use.

BACKGROUND

The Task Force was convened on August 22, 2002 and includes approximately 30 individuals representing a broad range of subject matter expertise and practical experience.

The Task Force established consensus based minimum requirements for emergency shelters, reviewed and validated required capacity assumptions, evaluated an extensive list of potential shelter

¹ In addition to this report, the Task Force Charter, the recordings of its meetings and working documents can be found [here](http://aceh.org/task-force): aceh.org/task-force

locations, established conceptual operating cost estimates, and consulted with members of the public including community councils, persons with lived experience and those currently unhoused at Centennial Park.

The Task Force agreed that the minimum requirements for emergency shelters would include 24/7 access, meals, onsite shower facilities (permanent or portable) and space onsite for a warming tent. The maximum capacity is limited to 150 per Title 16; however, this limit can be exceeded by either Assembly approval or declaration of a civil emergency². The Task Force also agreed that the use of HMIS should be mandatory for all emergency shelter locations to allow for tracking individuals and connect them to needed services and future housing.

The Task Force estimated the capacity needs based on reports of the updates on census at Centennial Campground and Street Outreach teams' best estimates as there has not been complete or consistent HMIS data for unsheltered individuals. Using that information, it is estimated approximately 350 persons today with the potential for increases as the Aviator mass care operations are phased out over the next several months, the end of rental assistance for some households, system inflow and higher utilization in the coldest parts of winter. In addition, prior experience indicates that there will be periods of reduced needs once PFD payments are received until those funds are exhausted by individuals. The projected initial utilization is approximately 70-75% or 245-263 individuals.

To ensure that people with lived experience and those currently experiencing homelessness were able to weigh in on potential emergency shelter options, a survey was conducted through street outreach and outreach to those currently in shelter or permanent supportive housing programs.

The sites evaluated included those that were reviewed as part of the facilitated process and additional locations that were identified by the Task Force members. Locations included MOA owned facilities, commercial properties, hotels, and vacant land. The site evaluations were performed by persons knowledgeable in the real estate market and in shelter operations. The list of potential sites was first screened to determine availability and suitability for minimum shelter requirements. The short list of locations that remained after the screening test was then further investigated to validate feasibility. Information investigated included site owners' willingness to support emergency shelter operations, physical condition of the property for human habitation, accessibility to transportation and services and proximity to existing shelter locations and sensitive community locations such as schools. As has been found in prior years, there are no immediately available emergency shelter locations without incurring some level of community impact and/or public protest.

² Title 16. D. Emergency shelter locations activated under this section shall be for no more than 150 clients in a single location without assembly approval. Emergency shelter locations activated by the mayor under a declaration of civil emergency and extended by the assembly may exceed the 150 client capacity and shall be allowed to remain operational at the activated capacity at the time of the termination of the civil emergency for up to one year following termination of the declaration of civil emergency.

FACILITIES / LOCATIONS

The locations that met all the above criteria were then grouped into two tiers:

- Tier 1 – Locations that can reasonably be placed in operation immediately (target September 30) and remain in operation for up to 90 days. Realistically tier 1 locations are those that are owned by the MOA and those that are owned by existing shelter operators with the potential for immediate expansion subject to funding. The 90-day time period provides for the operator to have assurance for a minimum term of operations.
- Tier 2 – Locations that have the potential to be placed in operation in approximately 90 days including those that need additional investigation to validate owner interest and property suitability. Tier 2 locations include primarily commercial properties and hotels (for housing conversions) where negotiations with owners are necessary and where physical site reviews need to be conducted to confirm suitability and safety. As potential Tier 2 locations are brought online the Tier 1 locations could be phased out to reduce community impacts depending on capacity needs and utilization.

Tier 1 Locations (in no particular order)

- Golden Lion: This location has 85 units of non-congregate capacity. The units are already furnished, and the site could be turned on immediately with no impact to current operations or users.
- Dempsey or Boeke Ice Arenas: Dempsey is the preferred location due to Ben Boeke's downtown location and it being the current "home" for Wolverines hockey. Both have similar capacity (240-260) and costs associated with operations. The Eagle River Mac Center was discussed but not included as a recommended Tier 1 location due to its distance from the homeless population.
- Dena'ina or Egan Centers: These locations have adequate size however are less desirable due to their downtown location and the lack of shower facilities. If, however, these sites do warrant further consideration it is possible to use trailer mounted showers indoors and a company in Fairbanks has been identified that has such units immediately available.
- Spenard and Fairview Recreation Centers: These locations meet the primary Tier 1 screening criteria however these sites are not recommended due to the significant negative impact to these disadvantaged communities.
- Existing program capacity expansion: Covenant House and Beans Café have indicated that they have the potential to turn on additional capacity very quickly if funding is made available. These sites are not adequate for the total capacity needed but would significantly augment the overall emergency shelter system. There may be additional existing shelter providers who could also provide incremental capacity with available funding.

Tier 2 Locations (in no particular order)

- Arctic Recreation Center – The facility appears to be very suitable for use and initial discussions with the owner indicate interest; however, a 1-year lease is expected to be required.
- 550 Bragaw (former Alaska Native Charter School) - The owners have indicated interest in pursuing an agreement. The recent engineering assessment of this site by The Boutet Company needs to be reviewed and revalidated to confirm suitability and possible capacity for emergency shelter use.
- 5151 Fairbanks (former GCI call center)– The evaluation of this site for suitability, capacity and owner interest is awaiting more information.
- Salvation Army Gym – Awaiting confirmation from the Salvation Army that this is a possible use, and if so the expected capacity.
- Hotels master leases and conversions for housing utilization – Several hotels have been identified and are currently being investigated to confirm owner interest and potential lease terms.
- Portable buildings – No feasible locations have yet been identified that are suitable for this option. This option is not considered highly suitable by the Task Force due to operational concerns including the lack of restroom and shower facilities inside the units. While the use of outdoor, portable facilities may be possible this is not a preferred operation. In addition, this option will be quite costly due to nature of staffing and security needs for isolated individual units.

OPERATIONAL COSTS

Based on the cost comparison, housing options in a MOA owned building or a purchased hotel conversion are the most cost-effective alternatives, particularly because they leverage federal Emergency Rental Assistance funds for rents.³ Second is a leased hotel for housing or non-congregate shelter and congregate shelter in a MOA site and leased site congregate shelter the most expensive options.

It is the Emergency Shelter Task Force's recommendation that four options be exercised as quickly as possible and simultaneously. These are a combination of private providers and locations and activation of MOA locations. Below is a cost summary of those options for the remainder of 2022 and how they each contribute to providing adequate capacity for 350 unsheltered individuals.

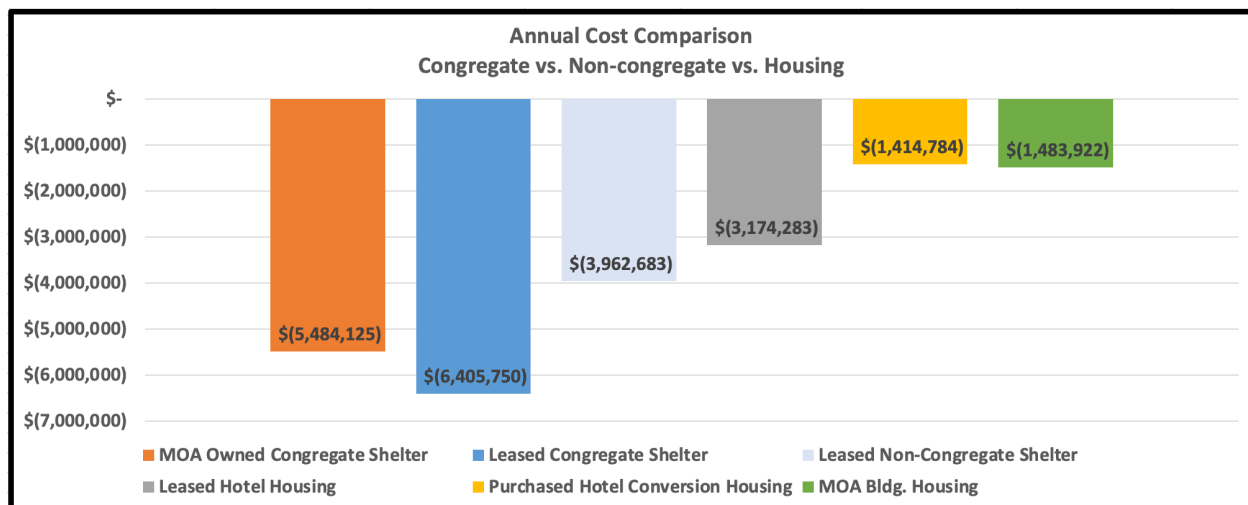
Below is a cost summary of the recommended options for the remainder of 2022 and how they each contribute to providing adequate capacity for 350 unsheltered individuals. This is based on an operational cost analysis conducted involving shelter, housing, and support services providers. The

³ The MOA currently has approximately \$8M in unappropriated Emergency Rental Assistance 2 funds.

analysis included a daily, monthly, and annual cost summary comparison based on assumptions depending on the type of operation.

Facility Type - Location	Capacity	Additional 2022 Cost (Oct-Dec)	Population
Non-congregate – Golden Lion	85-170 – depends on roommates	\$371,000 ⁴	Single Adults
Congregate – Dempsey	240-260	\$1.372M	Single Adults
Congregate – Brother Francis Shelter	20 ⁵	Already funded	Single Adults
Congregate - Covenant House	25	\$200,000 ⁶	Transition Age Youth (18-24 year old)
Semi-congregate - Beans Café	40	\$306,000 ⁷	Single Adults
TOTALS	330 shelter capacity + 85-136 housing capacity ⁸ = 415-466	\$2.250M	

The cost analysis shows that the most cost effective option is housing in a MOA owned building or a purchased hotel conversion, particularly because they leverage federal Emergency Rental Assistance funds for rents.⁹ The second most cost effective option is a leased hotel for housing or non-congregate shelter. Congregate shelter in a MOA site and leased site congregate shelters are the most expensive options. The assumptions for this analysis are on the following page.



⁴ Can reduce this amount by \$167,500 through federal emergency rental relief funds.

⁵ This is the second increase in census for Brother Francis Shelter under the appropriation in AR 2022-221(S). The total capacity at BFS will be 120 beginning October 1st for a total increase of 45 individuals.

⁶ Attachment A is the Covenant House proposal.

⁷ Attachment B is the Beans Café proposal.

⁸ Based on experience with other hotel housing conversions a percentage of 60% is assumed for roommates or couples – 2 people per room.

⁹ The MOA currently has approximately \$8M in unappropriated Emergency Rental Assistance 2 funds.

Per Person Cash Flow	MOA Owned Congregate Shelter	Leased Congregate Shelter	Leased Non- Congregate Shelter	Leased Hotel Housing	Purchased Hotel Conversion Housing	MOA Bldg. Housing
Total Income	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14	\$ 14	\$ 12
Total Expense	\$ 100	\$ 117	\$ 72	\$ 72	\$ 40	\$ 39
Per Person Cost	\$ (100)	\$ (117)	\$ (72)	\$ (58)	\$ (26)	\$ (27)
Annual Net Cash Flow	\$ (5,484,125)	\$ (6,405,750)	\$ (3,962,683)	\$ (3,174,283)	\$ (1,414,784)	\$ (1,483,922)

Key Assumptions	All -capacity is limited to 150 persons per location unless have assembly approval or civil emergency declaration		
	All - Access and services are provided 24/7		
	All - Meals and showers able to be delivered onsite		
	All - Staffing presumed on a 3 shift basis - am, swing, overnight		
	All - Supportive Services incur 10% federal indirect rate charge		
MOA Owned Congregate	Per person per day services rate inclusive of food		
	MOA facilities incur a M&O cost		
	1:30 day and 1:50 night staffing ratio		
	Not eligible for rental income		
Leased Congregate Shelter	Per person per day rate inclusive of food		
	Leased cost of 21,000 sq. ft. building assumed at 1.50 sq ft		
	Will incur additional shower and restroom costs based on building		
	Not eligible for rental income		
Leased Non- Congregate Shelter	Assumes a \$60 per night per room rental rate		
	Staff based on number of floors and building configuration		
	Not eligible for rental income		
Leased Hotel Housing	Assumes a \$60 per night per room rental rate		
	Use of ERA 2 funds at \$657/mo per unit without kitchen access (\$840/mo with communal kitchen access)		
	Staff based on number of floors and building configuration		
Purchased Hotel Conversion Housing	Building already purchased		
	Building costs based on prior hotel conversion plus 20% M&O set aside		
	Staff based on number of floors and building configuration		
	Use of ERA 2 funds at \$657/mo per unit without kitchen access (\$840/mo with communal kitchen access)		
	Assumes some roommate occupancies		
MOA Bldg. Housing	M&O for building costs based on prior hotel conversion plus 20% M&O set aside		
	Use of ERA 2 funds at \$657/mo per unit without kitchen access (\$840/mo with communal kitchen access)		
	Assumes some roommate occupancies		
	Staff based on number of floors and building configuration		

CONCLUSION

Using a multifaceted initial approach, the MOA can successfully turn on enough immediate capacity for shelter, while also defraying costs with investments in housing. These recommendations are focused on immediate activation for the next 90 days. There is an expectation that additional housing capacity is likely and that private locations may become available. The Task Force will continue to update its information on availability and costs for Tier 2 options as well as update census and utilization rates as capacity through mini grants may also be made available. A more fulsome report will be made in early to mid-October as this work continues.

If the Mayor's office or the Assembly would like to discuss these preliminary recommendations or provide further guidance as Tier 2 options are explored, the Task Force welcomes the participation and feedback.



P.O. Box 100620
Anchorage, AK 99510-0620

September 14, 2022,

To: Anchorage Municipal Emergency Shelter Task Force

RE: [Municipal Code Chapter 16.120](#) – *Emergency Shelter Plan for Homeless Persons*

Covenant House Alaska (CHA) is willing to create an additional 25 emergency cold weather beds and raise our age range from 18-21 to 18-24 from October 1st to March 31st. It has been our experience that in the winter months the community needs day services and much as overnight, and CHA also willing to provide day services for the 18 – 24-year old's who would access those beds.

To implement this cold weather shelter plan, we will need to increase staffing to accommodate 25 youth in our gymnasium, which is currently unused during the night. These additional services will cost \$400,000 for the 6-month period. The funds would strictly cover the additional personnel, food and other supplies needed to offer these beds services in a safe space. Without the additional funds, CHA will not be able to provide these additional cold weather services.

CHA meets all eligibility requirements to contract with the MOA. We have received Municipal funding, and we have consistently met and maintained all grant and reporting requirements.

CHA's Youth Engagement Center (YEC) located at 755 A Street is now authorized to serve youth 18-24 and receives annual inspections by the Anchorage Health and Fire Departments.

The 25 additional beds would be additional to the 40 beds CHA currently has in our YEC.

The CHA YEC is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year to provide emergency shelter and day services for youth ages 18 to 24.

Alison E. Kear
Chief Executive Officer
Covenant House Alaska
akear@covenanthouseak.org

cc: The Anchorage Health Department
cc: Assembly Member - Felix Rivera
cc: Assembly Member – Christopher Constant

Subject: Proposal for Emergency Shelter at Eide Street Property

Date: Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 4:33:05 PM Alaska Daylight Time

From: Lisa Sauder

To: Meg Zaletel

CC: Scott Lingle

Dear Meg,

We could accommodate up to 40 single adult males aged 24 plus. Please note that this facility is not handicapped accessible. Site is available beginning October 1. We would need to know ASAP whether this is a viable option, or we will make other usage of facility.

The configuration is the following:

One (1) quad room (plan would be three people)

Two (2) rooms with eight-person max capacity (plan would be max five people per room)

All congregant rooms have access to a shared bathrooms, living and kitchen space.

Ten (10) one-bedroom apartments that could accommodate three people.

Clients could also access shared living and kitchen space, but each apartment is fully equipped with a kitchen and one bathroom.

Total occupancy to allow for transitions would be 40.

This would need to be a referral only facility, no walk ups accepted to minimize impact on neighborhood.

Services to be provided:

- Each client would have access to meals on demand (three meals per day plus snacks)
- Dedicated navigator (minimum of one FTE) to assist clients in finding permanent housing and other services needed
- Internet access
- Minimum of two (2) monitors per eight-hour shift, staffed 24 hours per day
- All linens, furnishings, and access to coin operated laundry facilities
- Use of common kitchen and living area

The all-inclusive cost would be \$85 per person per day with a guarantee of 40 people.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.

Lisa Sauder

CEO, Bean's Cafe

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"Bean's Cafe exists to fight hunger, one meal at a time, while providing a pathway to self-sufficiency with