

## Fremont Winter Shelter 2020-2021 Final Report

The Fremont Winter Shelter, operated by the City of Fremont's Human Services Department, was open December 1, 2020 – March 28, 2021 for 117 consecutive days. We sheltered 101 individual clients, ranging in age from 17 – 70 years old. Food Donors provided 4,014 dinners. We had 2,364 bed nights of service and provided 2,364 breakfasts. Cumulative and monthly data are attached.

The Fremont Winter Shelter was one of only two Winter Shelters operating in Alameda County this year. Winter Shelters are congregate shelters, with minimal processes and requirements for entry. To open under the Shelter in Place, Purple Tier and Stay at Home Order restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Human Services Department developed new protocols to limit exposure of the virus, and any potential outbreaks. This year the shelter was located for the full four months, at the Fremont Teen Center.

The Fremont Winter Shelter program was possible with the Monitoring staff of new and returning monitors, partnerships with City Serve/Compassion Network, Abode Services, Bay Area Community Health, Alameda County Healthcare for the Homeless, and the CleanStart program. We were the beneficiary of grants and, corporate and philanthropic donations from: Cargill, RK Logistics, United Way of the Bay Area, Fremont Morning Rotary, American Association of University Women, and Alameda County Housing & Community Development, and many volunteers and individual donations from Fremont community members and organizations.

## Opening the Shelter:

The Winter Shelter program preparation began months before opening night. For the past seven years, the Winter Shelter program opened on or around November 15<sup>th</sup>. To implement new protocols and train all staff, we postponed opening the shelter until December 1<sup>st</sup>, but extended it through March 28<sup>th</sup>.

The following is a comprehensive list of changes made to the program to increase health and safety protocols:

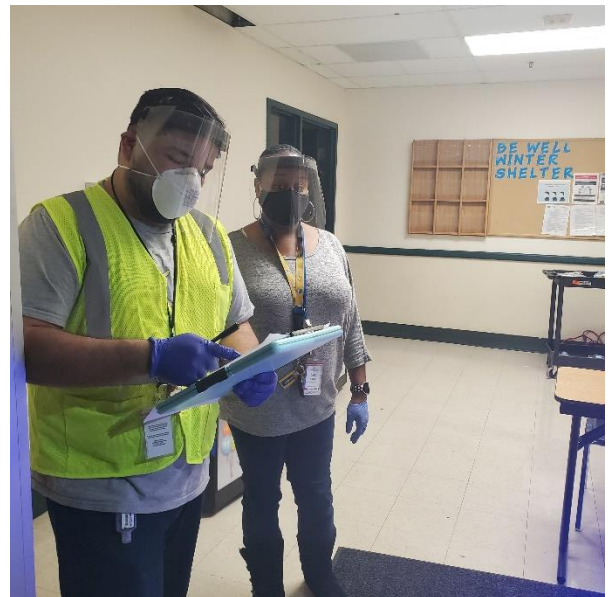
- a. Reduced capacity from 40 beds to 32
- b. Creating an Isolation Room, a repurposed office, where one bed was set aside for anyone showing symptoms of COVID 19
- c. Purchased completely new bedding (**pictured right**) with vinyl mattresses and steel frames, compared to canvas camping cots from previous years, these were bed bugs resistant, waterproof, and very easy to disinfect before and after shelter hours
- d. Distanced beds, 8ft-10ft, with participants sleeping in head to toe configuration
- e. Used one facility all season, which made it easier to maintain bed and bedding assignments
- f. Required masks (except while eating and sleeping) with daily temperature and symptom screening prior to entry
- g. Distanced dining, all dining tables were set 6 feet apart and allowed for 10 diners at a time.
- h. Changed dinner model from dine-in to pick-up, for those not registered to spend the night
- i. Changed breakfast model from dine-in to pick-up
- j. Increased cleaning and disinfection of commonly used surfaces, bathrooms, kitchen and bedding
- k. Increased air circulation measures, such open doors and multiple fans running, although not popular on cold nights
- l. Required PPE and training for all staff and volunteers
- m. Trained on COVID-19 symptoms and response protocols



## Operating the Shelter:

We continued a registration process similar to previous years. However, this year it was more of a requirement so that we had an opportunity to pre-screen participants for COVID-19 symptoms and protocols. Participants affiliated with the TriCities (Fremont, Newark, Union City) continued to be prioritized. Affiliation is determined through employment, enrollment in school, city of birth, last city housed in, city of high school, and where they were currently residing. We no longer accepted discharges directly from hospitals because the risk was too high. Exceptions were made for people who had a negative COVID-19 test in their paperwork. We continued to accept referrals through 211, the BACS Wellness Center, and service providers.

We did not require a negative COVID-19 test upon entry, or proof of vaccination (once they became available). Such a requirement would add a hardship and barrier upon entry to a program, for a population often distrustful of medical procedures and who may not have access to transportation or the ability to make appointment at testing facilities available at the time. Additionally, through consultation with County public health, it was advised that consistent screening and monitoring for symptoms are reliable to prevent spread of an illness, whereas tests serve as a point in time assessment and may not be reliable once the results are received.



Although we maintained our low barrier approach and did not require proof of a negative test, our participation was much lower than previous years. We believe there are a variety of factors for this:

1. Safer Ground programs remained in operation and extended their services beyond the initial December 2020 end date
2. Fear of COVID-19 prevented people from coming to a congregate shelter
3. Reduction in capacity
4. Weather is overall warmer and dryer, there is a noticeable reduction between January and February participation

We wanted to continue to provide dinners and supplies to those not registered with our program, or not interested in staying inside. To do so, we set up a pick-up process, where to-go bags and supplies were provided at the door upon request. Initially we had a separate table

outside but lack of volunteers and a very slow intake process made this unnecessary. If we had space available, we registered new participants at the door.

For those coming inside to eat and sleep, we staggered dinner entry to 10 diners at a time. We decided to open an hour early (5:30pm instead of 6:30pm) to prevent people from waiting too long to come inside. Similar to last year, we closed the doors from intake at 8pm, but made exceptions for people who worked or attended school.

Participants were assigned a bed, a sleeping bag and blankets, and had access to hygiene supplies, clothing, shoes, ponchos, umbrellas, food and snacks. Breakfast and lunch to go bags were provided upon departure from the facility every morning.

## PARTNERSHIPS

CleanStart, City of Fremont's mobile hygiene unit, visited the Teen Center 3 times a week to provide shower and laundry services, as there is no shower facility on site.

City Serve's Compassion Network provided volunteer coordination services and organized volunteers and food donors for every night. This program relies on the generosity of neighbors, faith based and community groups, to provide a warm dinner for participants.

Bay Area Community Health provide medical services and consultations with participants, twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursday. Their services included flu shots, prescription refills, making appointments, and treating acute illnesses such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Twice a month, they provided COVID testing.

Abode Services provided outreach, housing navigation, housing assessments, and Safer Ground referrals once a week on Wednesdays.

Healthcare for the Homeless and Alameda Health System operated a vaccine clinic for 3 consecutive days, in the final week of the program. Through that effort, 35 people were vaccinated at the shelter, and 35 more were vaccinated at our partner Islander shelter program.

## IN KIND DONATIONS & VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

- Cargill donated \$20,000
- RK Logistics donated \$5,000
- Fremont Morning Rotary donated \$2,600 to cater meals for a joint effort to feed the hungry and support local businesses
- In total we received \$29,000 in financial contributions
- A volunteer group spent a Sunday evening distributing \$1,000 worth of new clothing
- American Association of University Women organized a shoe drive, that resulted in 139 brand new pairs of shoes for distribution (**pictured right**)
- Daily Bowl, a non-profit which reclaims and distributes slightly blemished food products provided fresh fruits and breakfast items
- Many local individuals who took up knitting during the Stay at Home Order, including a Girl Scout Troop, donated handmade colorful scarves



## Overcoming Challenges

Operations during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic posed many challenges.

Within the shelter there was both anxiety and fearlessness of exposure to COVID-19. We maintained consistency in our messaging and practices for health and safety, to create an expectation of prevention. There were three times when staff had to respond to a potential exposure to COVID-19. On two of those occasions, a participant was exhibiting symptoms that could be present due to COVID-19 or other common ailments. In both situations, staff acted quickly, transferring the participant to the isolation room, removed and bagged their bedding, and notified management who immediately coordinated a referral into the Operation Comfort program for further monitoring. The third time a regular participant was notified by phone that his hospital-bound wife tested positive for COVID-19. Because staff were fluent in the participant's preferred language, and had developed a rapport with him, he was comfortable enough to share his situation and concerns. Understandably, this was stressful and concerning for staff and participants. It was decided that, for re-entry into the shelter the following night, all participants had to be tested on-site and those who were tested, would be part of a cohort for 14 days. Four participants fell into the criteria of direct exposure and were transported to Operation Comfort. Half of March, we supported a cohort, and in the final two weeks of our program, we were able to accept new participants. Because of this rapid response, no other positive tests were identified, and no outbreaks occurred in, or were associated with, the Fremont Shelter.

Fremont shelter monitor staff come from a diverse background and experiences, what is consistent is their compassion and quality customer service. Our shelter team does not have a clinician or mental health provider on site yet have to de-escalate many interactions with those

experiencing mental health issues. Unfortunately for individuals with severe mental health challenges, a low barrier congregate shelter may be their only alternative to sleeping outside, but is not appropriate for their unique needs.

The final month of service is always difficult, as we inevitably start to think *where will people go from here?* Throughout the month of March, we worked with remaining participants on referrals to the Fremont Housing Navigation Center (FHNC), Safer Ground and the Islander. Of the 25 remaining and sought support with next steps: five transitioned into the Islander, three transitioned in Safer Ground, one was reunited with family, and seven were referred to the Housing Navigation Center. We understand that some participants went to the other winter shelter in Alameda County, as well.

One participant, a 23-year-old woman, came to our winter shelter in January. She generally kept to herself but shared with us that she started working at a local grocery store. As soon as we heard of an opening at the FHNC, we referred her. She was resistant and unsure at first, but because the FHNC was so close to her work, and the close partnership between the two programs, she trusted us and tried the program. Within a month she was connected to a landlord and moved into her own unit.

Another participant, 60-year-old woman, came to our winter shelter as a referral from the hospital. Her health conditions were an immediate concern and her preferred form of communication was American Sign Language. Two of our monitors were able to communicate with her via ASL, other staff communicated in notes and through an interpreter using her cell phone. This participant needed a lot of support, she was hearing impaired, mobility impaired and had multiple chronic health conditions requiring medication. She was connected with Bay Area Community Health on one night to ensure she had the proper medication.

Understandably, shelter staff were concerned with her condition and future after the close of the program. Shelter management maintained communication with her hospital social worker, as this participant was often in and out of the emergency room. At the shelter, this participant was connected to Abode Services and complete a housing assessment, and later when referrals reopened, she was referred to a Safer Ground program. Her referral was still pending when the shelter closed on March 28th. To avoid her returning to unsheltered homelessness, City staff, Abode and Kaiser, collaborated to support her intake into the only other winter shelter in Castro Valley. In less than a week, she transitioned in the Safer Ground hotel program.

**20/21 Season Cumulative Data**

Unduplicated Count 101  
 Bed Nights of Service 2,364  
 Meals Distributed 4,014 To Go + Shelter dinners

| Demographics               |          | Percent of Total |
|----------------------------|----------|------------------|
| <b>Age:</b>                |          |                  |
| 18-24 (TAY)                | 4        | 4%               |
| 25-29                      | 6        | 6%               |
| 30-39                      | 18       | 18%              |
| 40-49                      | 17       | 17%              |
| 50-59                      | 27       | 27%              |
| 60-69                      | 20       | 20%              |
| 70+                        | 1        | 1%               |
| <b>Average age: 45</b>     | <b>8</b> | <b>8%</b>        |
| <b>Gender</b>              |          |                  |
| Male                       | 59       | 58%              |
| Female                     | 34       | 34%              |
| Declined                   | 8        | 8%               |
| <b>Race</b>                |          |                  |
| White (non Hispanic)       | 24       | 24%              |
| Multiracial                | 7        | 7%               |
| Pacific Islander           | 3        | 3%               |
| Asian                      | 8        | 8%               |
| Black                      | 21       | 21%              |
| Native American/Indigenous | 2        | 2%               |
| Other                      | 28       | 28%              |
| Declined                   | 8        | 8%               |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>           |          |                  |
| Hispanic/Latinx            | 28       | 28%              |
| <b>Employment</b>          |          |                  |
| Employed                   | 14       | 14%              |
| <b>Veteran</b>             |          |                  |
| Veteran                    | 7        | 7%               |

|                          | Last Housed | % of Total |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Fremont                  | 33          | 33%        |
| Newark                   | 7           | 7%         |
| Union City               | 5           | 5%         |
| <b>Tri City Subtotal</b> | <b>45</b>   | <b>45%</b> |
| Other Alameda County     | 14          | 14%        |
| Santa Clara County       | 5           | 5%         |
| Other Bay Area County    | 11          | 11%        |
| Other CA County          | 7           | 7%         |
| Out of State             | 10          | 10%        |

**December 1 - December 31 2020**

Unduplicated Count                    50  
 Bed Nights of Service                512  
 Meals Distributed                      969 to go + shelter dinners

| Demographics               |    | Percent of Total |
|----------------------------|----|------------------|
| <b>Age:</b>                |    |                  |
| 18-24 (TAY)                | 4  | 8%               |
| 25-29                      | 4  | 8%               |
| 30-39                      | 9  | 18%              |
| 40-49                      | 10 | 20%              |
| 50-59                      | 15 | 30%              |
| 60-69                      | 8  | 16%              |
| 70+                        | 0  |                  |
| <b>Average age: 45</b>     |    |                  |
| <b>Gender</b>              |    |                  |
| Male                       | 32 | 64%              |
| Female                     | 18 | 36%              |
| Declined                   | 0  |                  |
| <b>Race</b>                |    |                  |
| White (non Hispanic)       | 13 | 26%              |
| Multiracial                | 3  | 6%               |
| Pacific Islander           | 3  | 6%               |
| Asian                      | 4  | 8%               |
| Black                      | 6  | 12%              |
| Native American/Indigenous | 2  | 4%               |
| Other                      | 17 | 34%              |
| Declined                   | 2  | 4%               |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>           |    |                  |
| Hispanic/Latinx            | 17 | 34%              |
| <b>Employment</b>          |    |                  |
| Employed                   | 9  | 18%              |

|                          | Last Housed | % of Total |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Fremont                  | 9           | 18%        |
| Newark                   | 3           | 6%         |
| Union City               | 4           | 8%         |
| <b>Tri City Subtotal</b> | <b>16</b>   | <b>32%</b> |
| Other Alameda County     | 6           | 12%        |
| Santa Clara County       | 1           | 2%         |
| Other Bay Area County    | 6           | 12%        |
| Out of Bay Area          | 2           | 4%         |
| Out of State             | 4           | 8%         |
| Out of Country           |             |            |
| Declined                 | 15          | 30%        |



**January 1 - January 31 2021**

Unduplicated Count 51  
 Bed Nights of Service 682  
 Meals Distributed 1483 To Go + Shelter dinners

| Demographics               |    | Percent of Total |
|----------------------------|----|------------------|
| <b>Age:</b>                |    |                  |
| 18-24 (TAY)                | 3  | 6%               |
| 25-29                      | 3  | 6%               |
| 30-39                      | 7  | 14%              |
| 40-49                      | 9  | 18%              |
| 50-59                      | 19 | 37%              |
| 60-69                      | 10 | 20%              |
| 70+                        | 0  |                  |
| <b>Gender</b>              |    |                  |
| Male                       | 30 | 59%              |
| Female                     | 21 | 41%              |
| Declined                   |    | 0%               |
| <b>Race</b>                |    |                  |
| White (non Hispanic)       | 15 | 29%              |
| Multiracial                | 3  | 6%               |
| Pacific Islander           | 1  | 2%               |
| Asian                      | 5  | 10%              |
| Black                      | 14 | 27%              |
| Native American/Indigenous | 1  | 2%               |
| Other                      | 12 | 24%              |
| Declined                   |    | 0%               |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>           |    |                  |
| Hispanic/Latinx            | 12 | 24%              |
| <b>Employment</b>          |    |                  |
| Employed                   | 5  | 10%              |
| <b>Veteran</b>             |    |                  |
| Veteran                    | 2  | 4%               |

|                       | Last Housed | % of Total |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|
| Fremont               | 17          | 33%        |
| Newark                | 2           | 4%         |
| Union City            | 4           | 8%         |
| Tri City Subtotal     | 23          | 45%        |
| Other Alameda County  | 8           | 16%        |
| Santa Clara County    | 3           | 6%         |
| Other Bay Area County | 4           | 8%         |
| Other CA County       | 7           | 14%        |
| Out of State          | 6           | 12%        |

**February 1 - February 2021**

Unduplicated Count                      65  
 Bed Nights of Service                    681  
 Meals Distributed                         782 To Go + Shelter dinners

| Demographics               |    | Percent of Total |
|----------------------------|----|------------------|
| <b>Age:</b>                |    |                  |
| 18-24 (TAY)                | 3  | 5%               |
| 25-29                      | 4  | 6%               |
| 30-39                      | 12 | 18%              |
| 40-49                      | 10 | 15%              |
| 50-59                      | 21 | 32%              |
| 60-69                      | 15 | 23%              |
| 70+                        | 0  | 0%               |
| <b>Average age: 45</b>     |    |                  |
| <b>Gender</b>              |    |                  |
| Male                       | 40 | 62%              |
| Female                     | 25 | 38%              |
| Declined                   | 0  | 0%               |
| <b>Race</b>                |    |                  |
| White (non Hispanic)       | 16 | 32%              |
| Multiracial                | 3  | 6%               |
| Pacific Islander           | 2  | 4%               |
| Asian                      | 6  | 12%              |
| Black/African American     | 19 | 38%              |
| Native American/Indigenous | 1  | 2%               |
| Other                      | 18 | 36%              |
| Declined                   |    | 0%               |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>           |    |                  |
| Hispanic/Latinx            | 18 | 36%              |
| <b>Employment</b>          |    |                  |
| Employed                   | 5  | 8%               |
| <b>Veteran</b>             |    |                  |
| Veteran                    | 4  | 6%               |

|                          | Last Housed | % of Total |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Fremont                  | 25          | 38%        |
| Newark                   | 4           | 6%         |
| Union City               | 4           | 6%         |
| <b>Tri City Subtotal</b> | <b>33</b>   | <b>51%</b> |
| Other Alameda County     | 11          | 22%        |
| Santa Clara County       | 3           | 6%         |
| Other Bay Area County    | 6           | 12%        |
| Other CA County          | 5           | 10%        |
| Out of State             | 7           | 14%        |

**March 1 - March 28 2021**

Unduplicated Count 35  
 Bed Nights of Service 489  
 Meals Distributed 780 To Go + Shelter dinners

| Demographics               |    | Percent of Total |
|----------------------------|----|------------------|
| <b>Age:</b>                |    |                  |
| 18-24 (TAY)                | 0  | 0%               |
| 25-29                      | 1  | 3%               |
| 30-39                      | 5  | 14%              |
| 40-49                      | 7  | 20%              |
| 50-59                      | 12 | 34%              |
| 60-69                      | 9  | 26%              |
| 70+                        | 1  | 3%               |
| <b>Average age: 45</b>     |    |                  |
| <b>Gender</b>              |    |                  |
| Male                       | 20 | 57%              |
| Female                     | 15 | 43%              |
| Declined                   | 0  | 0%               |
| <b>Race</b>                |    |                  |
| White (non Hispanic)       | 10 | 29%              |
| Multiracial                | 3  | 9%               |
| Pacific Islander           | 0  | 0%               |
| Asian                      | 2  | 6%               |
| Black                      | 11 | 31%              |
| Native American/Indigenous | 0  | 0%               |
| Other                      | 9  | 26%              |
| Declined                   | 0  | 0%               |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>           |    |                  |
| Hispanic/Latinx            | 9  | 26%              |
| <b>Employment</b>          |    |                  |
| Employed                   | 6  | 17%              |
| <b>Veteran</b>             |    |                  |
| Veteran                    | 3  | 9%               |

|                          | Last Housed | % of Total |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Fremont                  | 14          | 40%        |
| Newark                   | 1           | 3%         |
| Union City               | 0           | 0%         |
| <b>Tri City Subtotal</b> | <b>15</b>   | <b>43%</b> |
| Other Alameda County     | 5           | 14%        |
| Santa Clara County       | 2           | 6%         |
| Other Bay Area County    | 2           | 6%         |
| Other CA County          | 5           | 14%        |
| Out of State             | 6           | 17%        |