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KEISHA LANCE BOTTOMS
MAYOR

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Brian P. Kemp
Governor
206 Washington Street
Suite 203, State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
United States

Re: Committee for the Homeless and Displaced Final Recommendations

Dear Governor Kemp:

On behalf of the Committee for the Homeless and Displaced, we respectfully submit our recommendations.

Over the last twelve (12) days our Committee and Subcommittees put together a clear set of six (6) objectives and sixteen (16) recommendations to ensure adequate shelter, resources and care for vulnerable populations in Georgia. Specifically, we recommend that the state:

- Provide funding to support the homeless and displaced leveraging local Continuum of Care and coordinating with existing processes and resources from GEMA
- Establish a coordination center focused on the homeless and displaced, within the GEMA coordination center, led by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to facilitate the communication and coordination among DCA, local Continuum of Care, Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), and local and state officials through the remainder of the pandemic

We believe that continued coordination and focus on the homeless and displaced population is warranted through the remainder of this crisis.

Thank you for appointing me to chair the Committee for the Homeless and Displaced. This is a topic that I care deeply about.

We stand ready to further assist as needed.

Sincerely,

Keisha Lance Bottoms

Governor's Coronavirus Task Force – Committee for the Homeless and Displaced Committee Recommendations

On March 12, 2020 Governor Brian P. Kemp announced the creation of four Committees of the Governor's Coronavirus Task Force.

Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms was appointed as chair the Committee for the Homeless and Displaced. The committee was charged with developing recommendations to ensure adequate shelter, resources, and care for vulnerable populations in Georgia.

The Committee established two Subcommittees to focus on 1) housing and transportation and 2) shelter and encampment guidance. The Committee and Subcommittees were comprised of public health professionals, representatives from the Continuums of Care across the State, State officials, health care providers, homeless service providers, and community organizations.

In a short period of time, the Committee has developed a set of recommendations centered around six objectives. These recommendations were developed to address clear needs voiced by the Committee and leverage the existing processes and resources of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and local Continuum of Care infrastructure across the State to ensure adequate shelter, resources, and care for the homeless and displaced in Georgia.

To accomplish these recommendations the Committee proposes two primary actions from the State:

- Provide funding to support the homeless and displaced leveraging local Continuum of Care and coordinating with existing processes and resources from GEMA
- Establish a coordination center focused on the homeless and displaced, within the GEMA coordination center, led by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to facilitate the communication and coordination among DCA, local Continuum of Care, Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), and local and state officials through the remainder of the pandemic

Objectives and Recommendations:

1) Prevent Additional People from Becoming Homeless

- a. **POLICY AND COMMUNICATION:** Stay evictions state-wide and ask landlords to halt evictions, communicating this to renters in multiple languages.
- b. **FUNDING AND COORDINATION:** Leverage emergency rental assistance funds, coordinated through local Continuum of Care, provided by Federal, State, Local, and Philanthropic funding and programs to support those who are at-risk of becoming homeless due to the impact of the coronavirus
- c. **POLICY AND ADVOCACY:** Provide additional funding to the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless and coordinate with local Housing Authorities to dedicated emergency vouchers

2) Support Enhanced Cleaning, Screening, and Referral

- a. COORDINATION: Distribute standardized screening tools and referral guidance through local Continuum of Care
- b. FUNDING AND COORDINATION: Distribute standardized cleaning guidance for shelters and support shelters with cleaning supplies through local Continuum of Care, leveraging GEMA request and procurement processes
- c. FUNDING AND COORDINATION: Supply additional personal protective equipment for shelter and outreach workers and persons experiencing homelessness for distribution through local Continuum of Care, leveraging GEMA request and procurement processes
- d. COORDINATION: Through local Continuum of Care, survey providers to identify existing or emerging gaps in services, such as food distribution, due to impacts from the coronavirus and provided supplies and support, leveraging GEMA request and procurement processes
- e. FUNDING AND COORDINATION: Through the local Continuum of Care distribute standardized educational materials to persons living on the street and supply sanitation supplies, leveraging GEMA request and procurement processes

3) Expand Testing for High-Risk Individuals and Areas

- a. POLICY AND FUNDING: Through local Boards of Health and healthcare providers support additional testing kits and mobile testing teams to facilitate broader testing of homeless and displaced persons living on the street and within congregate living environments, ensuring communication in multiple languages

4) Establish a Reporting Process Specific to Homeless and Displaced Persons

- a. COORDINATION: Through the GEMA and DCA led coordination center, support local Continuum of Care to coordinate with DCA, DBHDD, DPH, and local housing authorities to provide resources for appropriate shelter or supportive housing for all who are homeless and displaced to reduce their health risk during the pandemic
- b. COORDINATION: At the regional level, through the GEMA and DCA led coordination center, support Continuum of Care in developing a communication network of infection control and/or population health points of contact within primary hospitals to facilitate coordination of referral, quarantine, isolation, and post-isolation shelter or permanent housing for the homeless and displaced
- c. COORDINATION: Through the GEMA and DCA led coordination center, establish a state-wide reporting protocol to facilitate communication between health care providers, Continuums of Care, and local / state officials on cases and quarantine sites

5) Ensure Appropriate Options for Quarantine and Isolation are Available

- a. COORDINATION: At the regional level, identify quarantine and isolation housing for symptomatic individuals awaiting test results and those who are confirmed positive but who do not need hospitalization, coordinated and tracked by GEMA and local Continuum of Care
 - i. Up to approximately 3720 beds state-wide - Balance of State CoC (1500), Atlanta CoC (1130), DeKalb County CoC (135), Fulton County CoC (250), Savannah-Chatham County CoC (250), Columbus-Muscogee CoC (100), Athens-Clarke County CoC (85), Marietta-Cobb County CoC (160), and Augusta-Richmond CoC (135)

- b. **FUNDING:** Make available funding and facilities available to local Continuum of Care, in collaboration with GEMA and local Boards of Health, to support the needed beds for quarantine, isolation, and post-isolation shelter, including consideration for underutilized hotels, dorm rooms at public and private universities, modular housing, and detention facilities
- c. **FUNDING AND COORDINATION:** Through local Continuum of Care and Boards of Health, fund and train hourly workers in basic health needs related to quarantine, isolation, transportation, and food delivery, leverage Federal programs such as Disaster Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs)
- d. **ADVOCACY:** Advocate for additional federal funding to be placed into the Emergency Solutions Grant entitlement program for emergency lodging, shelter, and supportive services

6) Ensure Transportation Options are Available

- a. **FUNDING AND COORDINATION:** Through local Continuum of Care, contract with local EMS providers to support on-call transport of symptomatic persons experiencing homelessness