

Receiving Communities Toolkit

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Homeland
Security

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Overview

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is committed to supporting communities receiving migrants. Successful border management requires close coordination among federal, state, and local partners and non-governmental organizations. DHS is coordinating with officials across the nation to identify ways we can continue to maximize our support for local communities hosting recently arrived migrants, while enforcing the law and returning or removing those without a legal basis to remain in the country. The Biden-Harris Administration has delivered over \$1 billion in federal grant funding for sheltering and other eligible services, and, in collaboration with cities hosting work authorization sites, provided on-the-ground services to migrants who are eligible to apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) but have not yet done so. DHS recently sent over one million text messages and emails to migrants reminding them of their eligibility to apply for work authorization. We are also taking steps to expedite employment authorization processing for individuals paroled into the United States after making an appointment through the CBP One mobile app, the parole processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans for up to two years, and those who have applied for Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

While cities and states have different relationships, sheltering requirements, and governance structures, they are confronting the similar task of providing shelter and support for recently arrived migrants. Local officials know their communities best. This toolkit aims to equip them with tools and lessons learned from DHS's visits and meetings across the country and from the Department's extensive experience in incident management and response and immigration policy.

Best Practices

National Incident Management System as a Model

Sheltering migrants can strain local service providers. Non-government organizations (NGOs) and government leaders must work together in a community-wide effort to secure and deliver resources efficiently.

FEMA's National Incident Management System (NIMS) guides all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to and recover from incidents.¹ FEMA uses this structure to organize disaster response operations, including shelters and mass care. Based on NIMS best practices, DHS

¹ Additional tools available at [fema.gov/emergency-managers/nims](https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/nims).

recommends jurisdictions consider adopting an Incident Command System (ICS) government model for supporting migrant sheltering and services operations.²

The ICS is a standardized approach to incident management that can be particularly useful when there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction, or when incidents cross jurisdictions. The benefit of an ICS is that it clarifies chain of command and supervision responsibilities to improve accountability, streamline communication, and provide for an orderly and systematic planning process.

ICS is implemented by using a “Unified Command” concept in which incidents are managed through jointly approved objectives. Unified Command allows agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to work together effectively without affecting individual agency authority, responsibility, or accountability. Under the chain of command, an Incident Commander can direct and control the actions of all personnel and avoid confusion by requiring that orders flow from supervisors. The purpose of unity of command is to ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander for every objective. Under ICS, agencies work together through the designated members of the Unified Command—often the senior person from impacted agencies—to establish a common set of objectives and strategies and a single action plan for sheltering migrants.

By setting up an ICS-style organizational structure and coordinating process, jurisdictions can ensure resources are targeted appropriately. They will have strategic capacity to manage operations based on their local needs and objectives from initial intake of migrants to provision of shelter and humanitarian/social services support for migrants through the duration of their immigration proceedings. FEMA regional offices stand ready to assist state and local officials in standing up their own ICS for migrant sheltering and services.

Operational Recommendations

Migrant Population Assessment

Collecting basic demographic information from migrants arriving in communities and entering state or local shelter systems is critically important to understanding what services may be needed and how to help migrants toward self-sufficiency. This effort allows jurisdictions to prioritize the services offered, track progress toward independent living and develop appropriate exit strategies from shelters for the population they are serving.

² See Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS 100, [FEMA - Emergency Management Institute \(EMI\) Course | IS-100.C: Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS 100](#).

These details inform the support that DHS and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) can provide to help reduce barriers for new arrivals in shelter who are eligible to apply for work authorization, shortening the time it takes to receive employment authorization.

In addition to standard biographic details, jurisdictions should collect the following information during a standard intake process:

- **A Numbers:** A-Numbers are unique nine-digit number issued to migrants when they enter the United States. This number can be found on the I-94 Arrival/Departure record that is issued by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for individuals encountered and processed upon their entry to the United States. This number can also be found on Form I-862, Notice to Appear, the charging document that initiates removal proceedings in immigration court. The A Number is the best way for the federal government to determine the status and eligibility of migrants for work authorization.
 - Please note that the collection of A Numbers is required if jurisdictions plan to use Shelter and Service Program (SSP) funding for services.
 - Migrants can access their Form I-94, Arrival/Departure record – the document that includes a noncitizen’s admission status and expiration date – online at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>.
 - For those who received an appointment through the CBP One mobile application, they may also log-in to CBP One to retrieve relevant documentation. CBP One is an app for noncitizens located in Central or Northern Mexico to request and schedule an appointment to present themselves at certain Southwest Border land ports of entry.
- **Country of Citizenship:** Nationals of different countries may be eligible for different forms of protection or status, such as Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Understanding and tracking nationality will help identify which migrants may be eligible for different kinds of immigration benefits. It will also help jurisdictions understand language needs for broader support.
- **Date of Entry into the United States:** Migrants should provide the date of their entry into the United States. Eligibility for some country-specific programs, such as TPS, are tied to the date that a migrant arrived in the United States. The date of entry combined with country of citizenship is critical to supporting current or future benefit identification.
- **Method of Entry into the United States:** Whether migrants entered at a U.S. Port of Entry or whether they crossed in-between ports of entry can help clarify whether migrants are eligible for work authorization. If migrants entered with a CBP One appointment and are paroled into the United States, or if they flew into the United States via the parole processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, or Venezuelans (CHNV), they are immediately eligible to apply for work authorization for the duration of their parole. If migrants did not enter with a CBP One appointment but were encountered and provided parole, they should be asked to provide the period of parole they were granted.

- To check parole status, migrants can visit <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/>.
- **Contact Information:** Since migrants may change their physical addresses, jurisdictions should collect email addresses and a U.S. phone number to better be able to reach migrants throughout the duration of their immigration proceedings.

See “Sample Questions for Intake” in Appendix A.

Data Management

Migrant sheltering operations should use a single system to track individuals in their shelter system. Many jurisdictions use multiple data systems of various quality and these systems may not communicate with one another, which results in inconsistent and inaccurate information.

Data systems should be interoperable and maintain safe quality standards to ensure effective provision of legal and case management services. At a minimum, if data systems are not linked or interoperable, jurisdictions should assign unique identifiers to individuals and/or families so that they can be tracked across different systems. Jurisdictions should also impose data access and security standards for all systems and contractors.

Co-Locating Services

Legal and case management services are often most efficiently housed at one location. However, this location may not be convenient to migrants in shelters and/or those who lack transportation resources to reach the site of clinics or services.

If legal and case management services cannot be located at or near shelters, providers should “ride the circuit” and bring both lawyers and non-lawyer services to shelters where feasible. This can include creating spaces at shelter sites, nearby libraries, or other community centers at which individuals can receive assistance in completing documents. Volunteers from local law schools or social work schools may also have access to communal spaces to host clinics or spaces for support sessions. If support is being provided to fill out applications (such as EADs or asylum applications), jurisdictions should ensure internet infrastructure can handle the high volumes necessary for online filing.

Not all conversations and consultations will be appropriate to host in an alternative setting like a library. However, when appropriate, providing services to migrants near or where they are sheltering can greatly expedite application completion and provision of other basic services.

Sheltering Strategy

Sheltering Concepts

While all sheltering missions have unique requirements, several fundamental concepts are broadly applicable to sheltering, including:

- Provide a safe, sanitary, and secure setting for sheltering.
- Respect and comply with all confidentiality requirements when providing shelter support.
- Provide accommodations for people with disabilities, access and functional needs, and those who support them.
- Provide accommodations for residents' varying cultural, faith-based, and language preferences.
- Provide accommodations for assistance animals, service animals, and household pets.
- Leverage the whole community to enable a holistic process for providing assistance and addressing community needs.

Sheltering Considerations

Sheltering is a collaborative effort with local government and community partners that includes designating, planning, resourcing, operating and closing of shelters. Participating agencies/organizations will develop internal procedures and train personnel to perform the duties and responsibilities that will be paramount to the success of the operation. The most common shelters that will be implemented in a migrant mission are Congregate Long-Term and Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS), which will be outlined within this section.

Congregate Long-Term Shelter Facility:

Congregate long-term sheltering, generally provided in large open settings that have little to no privacy and that typically serve other purposes, must be in safe, sanitary, and secure facilities. The facilities should also be accessible and have the capability to provide protection from adverse weather conditions for extended periods of time. The focus of this kind of shelter is not on the number of people sheltered but on the need for additional or supplemental services due to the extended period individuals will be sheltered.

These types of shelters usually require large amounts of space, resources and staffing requirements that can be found on the [Mass Care Strategy website](#). Many of these requirements can be supplemented by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) or by procuring contracts with companies that specialize in offering sheltering services.

Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS)

An NCS provides alternative solutions when congregate sheltering methods are unavailable, overwhelmed or when longer-term temporary sheltering is required. Non-congregate sheltering is traditionally conducted in hotels/motels, dormitories, and retreat-style camps. Non-traditional non-congregate sheltering may be conducted in converted buildings, transportable temporary housing units like travel trailers, or other facilities with private sleeping spaces. These locations need to consider where migrants will get food and have opportunities to meet with organizations that can provide resources and support.

As an NCS is implemented, the state and local government will need to engage with NGOs and/or businesses to procure and contract for goods and services supporting shelter operations, as needed. These contracts should ensure that the resources can be delivered to hotels, especially as migrants may be spaced out within a community. Additionally, a process should be developed to identify and establish regular check-ins with the NCS population while being lodged in a hotel (i.e. tracking occupancy of rooms).

Identifying Facilities for Congregate Shelter and Non-Congregate Shelter

When identifying a location and facility for sheltering operations, coordination should include the local and state emergency management agency, the lead sheltering agency and other provider agencies to determine which facilities are available and compliant with relevant regulations. The locations should be in a safe and secure area outside of any potential risk areas (e.g., flood plains, hazard sites) and should be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), (Facilities built or altered since 1992 are more likely to be compliant). If a selected location is not ADA-compliant, it must be made accessible before it can be used as a shelter.

Additionally, facilities should have adequate accommodations (e.g., toilets, showers) and access to heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) and generators. An inspection of a facility should be conducted prior to the opening and throughout the lifespan of the shelter to ensure a safe and healthy environment for the shelter residents.

Staffing the Shelters

One of the greatest challenges when operating a shelter is recruiting and maintaining adequate staff. Shelters are staffed by shelter teams that vary in size and composition according to the kind of shelter and the number of individuals staying in the facility. Typically, the positions needed to initially open and operate a shelter are: Shelter Manager and Shift Supervisors, as well as staff to support registration, feeding, dormitory, logistics, as well as health and mental health services. Understanding the exact amount of staffing levels can be challenging. Guidance can be found in the [Shelter Guidance Aid and Staffing Matrix](#) and [Shelter Field Guide FEMA P-785](#).

Wraparound Services or Support Services

Wraparound services include basic social services, access to transportation, police/fire protection, emergency/health care services, grocery stores, childcare, and educational institutions. Local governments will coordinate with available whole community partners to increase access to wraparound services and resources, including individuals with access and functional needs. Services may include:

- **Feeding Services:** Shelters must have a sufficient supply and an area within or nearby the shelter to feed the population using two shifts (seatings) per meal, serving two meals plus snacks/hydration to each person per day.
 - These services should account for food allergies and dietary restrictions, typical diet of those in their care, and religious observances. Local organizations such as hospitals, restaurants and cafeterias, schools, contracted caterers, and non-profits can assist in providing this service.
- **Access and Functional Needs:** Individuals with access and functional needs, which may include older adults, must be considered when providing services. Assistive technology, portable ramps, bariatric equipment and other forms of support for this population are essential. This should also account for acquiring and deploying durable medical equipment (e.g., walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs) and consumable medical supplies (e.g. bandages, gauze).
 - **Language Accessibility:** Shelters are expected to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to programs and services for persons with limited English proficiency. These include the availability of relay services, American Sign Language interpreters and other forms of accessible communication.
- **Medical Support:** Ensure access to medical services including dental care and access to prescriptions and other resources to address medical needs on site. Shelters can provide methods for obtaining, storing, dispensing, documenting, and disposing of medications. Shelter staff should know state and local laws and regulations surrounding these services.
 - **Mental Health Support:** Any individual in a shelter may be in need of mental health services. Consideration should be given to offering mental health services to both adults and children who find themselves in shelters.
- **Transportation services:** When providing transportation services, people with functional and access needs must be accommodated with accessible transportation resources. Some forms of transportation that shelters can utilize are local and community transportation, airport shuttle buses, vans from places of worship, and local school buses.

Shelter Operations Assessments

Shelter Assessments should be conducted throughout the duration of shelter operations to facilitate support, not to ensure compliance. As part of this assessment, the team should review the available resources to develop an abbreviated outlook of the trends of the shelter population, a rough estimate of how many are likely to have long-term sheltering needs, and how long they anticipate congregate and/or non-congregate shelter operations to continue.

Ongoing assessments of capabilities and shortfalls are critical to an effective and efficient operation, and it is recommended that these assessments are conducted every operational period. Examples of detailed assessments can be found on the [Mass Care Strategy website](#), but some questions that can be used are:

- What is the current mass care situation?
- What are the future planning considerations?
- Are we meeting the needs of the individuals?
- Are we providing the right services in a timely manner?
- Can mass care operational priorities be met within established timeframes?
- Are more mass care resources required? If so, what kind, type and quantity are needed?

Answers to these questions can determine if the demand for sheltering and resources are increasing. If the demand begins to expand beyond local government capacity, a sheltering task force can be initiated to coordinate the increasing need of sheltering operation with providers and other local community partners within their jurisdiction to provide sheltering and shelter support.

Warming Centers

In addition to providing shelter services, there may be a need to provide warming centers to migrant populations. A warming center is a temporary facility or mobile asset that is made available during extreme temperature conditions when normal coping mechanisms are ineffective or unavailable.

Warming centers are not overnight shelters. They are open for a limited number of hours and for a limited number of days and provide limited services. Centers are not day care for children, the elderly, or others who cannot care for themselves. It is assumed that individuals who use the centers can return to their shelter or other alternate location when the centers are closed.

A warming center is designed for non-continuous (non-24/7) operation. If a cold-related emergency persists or is predicted to persist beyond the operational hours of the center, and it is not safe for individuals to return to their previous location, a shelter might need to be opened.

Exit Strategy

While handling daily arrivals may overwhelm local resources at times, planning for an exit strategy to help migrants reach self-sufficiency as they await the results of their immigration proceedings is essential. An exit strategy can outline how migrants will depart sheltering operations and achieve more independent living.

Some jurisdictions limit the time migrants can remain in shelters, while other jurisdictions have mandatory sheltering requirements. At a minimum, those with mandatory sheltering requirements should develop a timeline of milestones for migrants to meet to ultimately enable independent living. Case management and legal services can be directed to migrants at key milestones to ensure progression towards exiting the shelter system.

Milestones to Independence

Jurisdictions should establish mandatory steps that migrants take towards achieving self-sufficiency and independence, and work toward providing resources to help migrants reach these steps.

Milestones may include:

- Filing an application for Asylum
- Filing an application for Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- Filing an application for TPS
- Enrollment in health services
- Enrollment in school for minors
- Connection with local services
- Case management appointments/sessions
- Legal clinic appointments/sessions

Shelter Transition Services

In addition to the critical wrap around services for shelters mentioned earlier, shelters can be a location for migrants to access other services needed to support their transition out of the shelter environment. Services may include:

- **Immediate Sheltering:** Provides community based, general population sheltering.

- **Casework:** Provides emergency crisis assistance and referrals for shelter residents and their families.
- **Case Management:** A time-limited process that involves a partnership between a case manager and a shelter resident to develop and carry out a transition plan.
- **Legal Services:** Immigration law/system is complex, and providing legal services can help navigate the immigration system and to ensure that their rights are protected with a sense of security and respect. Legal representation can help them obtain green cards, citizenship, special visas, and other critical legal services.
- **Social and Support Services:** A broad range of community services that may assist with housing, healthcare, substance abuse/addiction, mental health and other supportive services.
- **Transportation Services:** Includes fixed route transportation; paratransit services; bus tokens; and subsidized programs.
- **Children's Services:** Includes counseling, advocacy, and getting shelter residents into a routine of school.
- **Area Agencies on Aging and Services:** Provides access to programs and services for older persons at the local level.
- **Disability Services:** Includes paratransit information and referral; assistance with replacement of durable medical equipment and other assistive and adaptive technologies; restarting home and community-based services; case management support; integration into all programs, etc.
- **Feeding Assistance:** Includes mobile and fixed feeding, food banks, and bulk distribution of food supplies.
- **Unmet Needs:** Includes food, clothing, shelter, first aid, and long-term needs such as financial, physical, emotional or spiritual well-being.
- **Protection and Advocacy:** Includes support for adults and children with disabilities in exercising their legal rights, which help to ensure the health and safety of certain shelter residents.

Co-locating services within a shelter is often most efficient. However, some locations may not be convenient to migrants who may be housed at a great distance and lack transportation. It is recommended that legal clinic and case management services providers bring both lawyers and non-lawyer volunteers to shelters.

Case Management Services

Not all migrants will need intensive services, but upfront case management upon intake can help drive success in the exit strategy for all incoming migrants. Investing in case management can help

ensure a whole-of-community effort toward supporting migrants and helping them reach self-sufficiency more quickly. Jurisdictions may have existing case management resources through social work services or healthcare programs that could be adapted or utilized for best practices.

Case management for migrants may include a variety of efforts, including identifying connections to friends or family to support resettlement, supporting acclimation to public services and systems, and connecting migrants to legal services, jobs, or opportunities like trainings or apprenticeships.

Case management needs will likely depend on each migrant's different resources, existing relationships, and their individual immigration circumstances. In some cases, a short consultation with a case manager at the time of intake can lead to a household leaving shelter care within days. Case managers can also identify eligibility for immigration benefits like TPS, work authorization, Cuban/Haitian Entrant benefits, and more.

Providing case management services, including by hiring or contracting multi-lingual services, should be prioritized based on populations being served. Where cost-prohibitive, identifying volunteer coordination to leverage diaspora groups and networks can be a helpful resource and positive way to channel a willingness to help.

DHS Resources to Support Receiving Communities

Work Authorization Support

DHS is working to ensure that migrants who enter via lawful pathways and are eligible to apply for Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) know it and once submitted can receive their work permit in a timely manner. For example, beginning October 1, USCIS began accelerating processing for EAD applications filed by parolees who scheduled an appointment through CBP One and who used the Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan parole processes to a median processing time of 30 days. USCIS is dedicating additional personnel and implementing improvements to decrease the median processing time for these applications from 90 days to 30 days. USCIS will also work to decrease median processing times for EAD applications associated with the Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan parole processes to 30 days. See Appendix C for an overview of work authorization eligibility.

USCIS offers support to jurisdictions to serve noncitizens in their request for employment authorization or navigating the immigration benefits process. Depending on the jurisdiction's populations and needs, support may include training, educational engagement, or application support services such as intake or biometrics. Training for governmental and private partners in sheltering operations, including legal service providers and case managers, can be provided remotely. These engagements can include but are not limited to identifying the necessary immigration documents to establish application eligibility for immigration benefits, including parole-based work authorization and TPS.

USCIS can provide resources to help jurisdictions in their efforts to complete applications for EADs at scale. Our approach is to work with cities in two phases:

Phase 1: Rapid Response

- **Objective:** To support individuals with 2-year parole or 150 days on asylum clock to immediately apply for work and to receive an EAD in approximately 30 days where eligible.

Phase 2: Steady State

- **Objective:** To ensure ongoing EAD assistance for people entering the shelter-system as near in time to entrance as possible or those nearing their 150-day asylum clock. To also support efforts on the ground in relation to other application types.

Necessary conditions for this include partnership of the city, state, or both; local volunteers, including legal service providers; a designated space to conduct such a clinic; and the identification of the eligible population of individuals for whom appointments can be booked. Given the range of immigration services and benefits, the Department encourages jurisdictions to reach out to USCIS for more information: public.engagement@uscis.dhs.gov.

Interagency Coordination

FEMA regional offices play a lead coordinating role in harmonizing broader U.S. Government resources. They can provide federal property analysis and review for sheltering and intake sites. Additionally, regional offices, can assist jurisdictions in setting up an ICS and sharing best practices tailored to the specific jurisdiction. For more information please reach out to your regional administrator and DHS Intergovernmental Affairs: fema.gov/about/contact.

Data Management

DHS has worked closely with US Digital Service (USDS) to develop IT systems for Operation Allies Welcome. This system, Hummingbird, was used to help place and track resettlement milestones for refugees. DHS and USDS have technical experts that can discuss with your IT teams in setting up and developing systems for supporting migrants. For more information, please contact: swb-coordination@hq.dhs.gov.

Further Information

For questions with regard to any of the above, please contact the DHS Office of Partnership and Engagement's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, who can direct you to the appropriate office within the Department or other agencies for further information: swb-coordination@hq.dhs.gov.

Other Sheltering Resources

Communications and Information Sharing

A **communication plan** developed through an effective and inclusive framework is critical for a successful shelter operation. Jurisdictions should maintain consistent communications with migrants with the goal of providing timely information to help move individuals out of needing shelter services. Developing a series of regular touch points and reminders about steps such as filing for asylum applications, work authorization, and benefits enrollment can ensure individuals are moving towards self-sufficiency and exiting the shelter system for the duration of their immigration proceedings.

Shelters should ensure information on applying for immigration benefits, receiving services, and requirements for check-ins are shared with migrants at all touchpoints. All communication should be made available in alternate formats for non-English speakers and for individuals with hearing or visual disabilities.

Best practices for a communication plan including but are not limited to the following:

- Interact regularly with shelter residents to answer questions, quell rumors and restate shelter rules. Regular communication conveys a sense of routine and a transparency aimed at comforting residents.
- Develop a series of regular touch points and reminders to move folks through the process of exiting the shelter system, such as filing of asylum applications, Employment Authorization Document (EAD), benefits enrollment, etc. Multi-lingual resources should be readily accessible and ever present: handouts upon intake, postings in hallways of sheltering sites, on walls in dining facilities, and in other common areas of shelter services.
- Conduct daily briefings with residents to ensure that there is a timely and accurate flow of information. Use this briefing to inform residents of activities within the shelter and the overall situation.
- Communicate via email and phone as phone numbers may no longer be working, may have changed or belong to a travel companion. Email addresses are less likely to change.
- Provide shelter residents with access to local news via a television, radio and newspaper. Turn on the captioning features on televisions.
- Provide information on services, e.g., government agencies, local community-based organizations and other assistance programs.
- Maintain bulletin/message boards as a means for disseminating information to the shelter population. Update postings throughout the day.

See “USCIS Handout on Important Information About Working Legally in the United States” in Appendix D. DHS provides flyers online that can be easily downloaded and printed in the “Handouts” section here: <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/important-information-about-working-legally-in-the-united-states>.

Mass Care Trainings

K0419 Shelter Field Guide Training for State and Local Communities.: [Emergency Management Institute | Course Schedules \(fema.gov\)](#) Next class is Jan 22, 2024.

IS-406: Operating a Shelter: [FEMA - Emergency Management Institute \(EMI\) Course | IS-406: Operating a Shelter](#)

FEMA Shelter Resources

National Mass Care Strategy Website: [Home - National Mass Care Strategy](#)

Shelter Field Guide: [Shelter Field Guide FEMA P-785 \(nationalmasscarestrategy.org\)](#)

Multi-Agency Shelter Plan Template: [Multi-Agency Shelter Plan Template \(nationalmasscarestrategy.org\)](#)

Appendix F: [Shelter Transition: Appendix-F-Transition-to-Alternate-Sheltering-Final-Version.pdf \(nationalmasscarestrategy.org\)](#)

Sheltering Guidance Aide and Staffing Matrix: [White Paper Suggested Format](#)

How to Develop Agreements for Mass Care Services: [How to Develop Agreements for Mass Care Services \(nationalmasscarestrategy.org\)](#)

Other References

Border Shelter Toolkit: [Border Shelter Toolkit | UNHCR US](#)

ADA Requirements: [ADA Requirements: Service Animals | ADA.gov](#)

Sphere Training: <https://spherestandards.org/online-courses/>

[Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended](#)

Other Government Resources

U.S. Digital Services (USDS): USDS can consult on data management systems and assist in guiding design.

U.S. Department of Labor: State Workforce Agencies can reach out to their federal counterparts for technical assistance on requirements and best practices for increasing access to the public workforce system for new arrivals with work authorization.

U.S. Department of Education: U.S. Department of Education: The Department of Education has grants and resources, including for English Language Learners, that can support schools and districts in meeting student needs when school populations have increased. Students residing in shelters may also be eligible for free school breakfast and lunch programs.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): Via the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), HHS has a Medical Reserve Corps program that operates in all states. These volunteers can be used to provide medical services and resources. HHS also has technical expertise they can provide. The HHS Office of Refugee Resettlement works with a vast network of NGOs, state and local partners, and resettlement agencies nationwide to help with case management and resettlement of refugees. CDC can support vaccination programs through its national programs and awards.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): States, Cities, and County governments along with Housing Agencies can reach out to regional HUD offices and their federal counterparts for guidance on the rules and requirements surrounding HUD's programs and to request Technical Assistance.

U.S. Department of State: The Department of State can assist in connecting jurisdictions with consular contacts to help facilitate the issuance of new documents for those who do not have them.

EFSP, EFSP-H, and SSP Funds

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP). EFSP is a FEMA-funded grant program authorized by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. The EFSP National Board is the sole recipient of EFSP grant funds from FEMA and establishes the program's policies, procedures and guidelines, and determines eligible services for funding subawards. EFSP provides funding to supplement and expand ongoing work of local nonprofit and governmental social service organizations to provide shelter, food and supportive services to individuals and families who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, hunger and/or homelessness.

From 2019 to 2023, Congress authorized additional EFSP funding specifically for humanitarian assistance (EFSP-H) to families and individuals encountered by DHS who entered through the Southwestern Border and are now awaiting their immigration court proceedings. In 2023, the EFSP-H program was phased out and replaced by the Shelter and Services Program (SSP).

The Shelter and Services Program. The 2023 Omnibus funding bill authorized the creation of a new grant program, the SSP. SSP made federal funds available to support shelter and related activities provided by non-federal entities, including facility improvements and construction, in support of relieving overcrowding in short-term holding facilities of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). SSP is a CBP program that is administered by FEMA. The objectives of SSP are:

- To provide funding to non-federal entities that serve migrants recently released from DHS custody to temporarily provide shelter, food, transportation, acute medical care, personal hygiene supplies, and labor necessary to manage cases to provide these services; and,
- To provide funding to non-federal entities to increase their capacity to temporarily shelter migrants recently released from DHS custody, including renovations and modifications to existing facilities.

Note that A-number (or similar DHS identification) collection is required, and all allowable activities noted below must fall within 45 days after a migrant is released from DHS custody.

SSP allowable activities related to sheltering are as follows:

- Per diem per migrant sheltered in an overnight congregate facility; applicants can request full per diem on the first and last days of any multi-day stay (rate cannot exceed \$12.50 per migrant per day) OR rental costs of real property used for providing services covered under SSP.
- Hotel/motel service provided for 45 days per individual or family (hotel/motel service cannot exceed 10 percent of the total funding requested by the applicant). Hotel/motel room costs used to provide services should be reasonable based on the rate set by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) for the location plus necessary taxes and fees, or to the extent the costs do not exceed charges normally allowed by the applicant in its regular operations.

- Cots and beds, including pillows
- Temporary structures (e.g., tents)
- Linens (e.g., sheets, towels, wash cloths)
- Overnight shelter utilities (electricity, gas, water) (rate cannot exceed \$10 per migrant served per day)
- Non-overnight facility utilities (electricity, gas, water) (rate cannot exceed \$5 per migrant served per day)
- Maintenance and housekeeping (e.g., repair and cleaning supplies, shower maintenance)
- Contracted services (e.g., security, laundry, trash pickup, cleaning services)
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider use of shelter services in compliance with the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990, which encourages fire safety in places that offer lodging to the public.

SSP allowable activities related to Warming Centers are as follows:

- Funding for warming buses is an allowable expense under the Congregate Shelter category as a temporary structure (NOT transportation).
- SSP funds can be used to support the purchase or rental of warming buses; federal and entity procurement requirements will apply.
- Warming buses supported by SSP funding may only be utilized for the sheltering of migrants and must operate under the same service guidelines as all other SSP activities.
- Rental costs of real property used for providing services covered under the SSP are allowable for both overnight and non-overnight congregate facilities.

For a full list of allowable activities under SSP, see the amended FY 2023 funding notice, Appendix A. Note that these requirements are relevant to the FY 2023 SSP. Should Congress appropriate funds for SSP again in FY 2024, there may be changes to scope and allowability.

Appendix A: Self-Assessment

The following is intended to assist jurisdictions in assessing where there may be gaps in information or data, governance, operations.

1. What is your governance framework for managing sheltering operations? Is there a leader directing operations? Do suboffices managing portions of sheltering and services operations report in to a single leader with decision-making authority (even if they do not report to this leader in their traditional duties)?
2. What is your strategy for exiting migrants from shelters? If none, what frameworks have you established to assist migrants with obtaining work authorization, applying for asylum, applying for TPS, etc.?
3. Are you using a single digital system to collect shelter resident information? If you are using multiple systems, can these systems communicate or link with one another to track service delivery and outcomes leading to key milestone achievements?
4. What types of basic and demographic information are you collecting from shelter residents? Are you collecting the above recommended information?
5. Have you identified those individuals that entered the United States via a CBP One appointment or the CHNV program and were granted two years of parole?
6. What screening is done to contact friends or relatives of new arrivals? What screening or questions are asked about resettlement or travel options to other locations?
7. What case management services are provided on arrival? What case management services are provided or available? How are case management services targeted to households?
8. What legal services are provided on arrival? What legal services are provided or available? How are legal services targeted to households?
9. Where are case management and legal services provided? Is/Are these locations accessible to shelter residents? Is transportation available or accessible from shelters?
10. What communication do you have with residents and by what means? What information are you communicating about completing necessary processes like applying for TPS, asylum, an EAD, etc.?
11. Are you partnering with social service organizations and local nonprofits to provide services to develop or support models that may assist in greater efficiencies and scalability? Are you partnering with local graduate school clinics (legal, social work) to provide services?

Appendix B: Sample Intake Questions

1. What country are you a citizen of?

2. What date did you enter the United States?

3. When you entered the United States, did you enter at an official port of entry?

a) A port of entry is a central location where persons on foot and vehicles cross or an airport.

4. If yes to entering at a port of entry, did you have a CBP One appointment?

a) **If yes to having a CBP One appointment, confirm again:** To confirm, you entered with an appointment you scheduled with the CBP One App? If so, you are eligible to apply for work authorization immediately.

– *If available, you can review the Notice to Appear (Form I-862) issued to the individual to confirm that the box is checked that the person is an “arriving alien” and that the NTA was signed by “officer.” Both are further indications that they were processed by CBP at a port of entry and likely paroled. There will be an I-94 Arrival-Departure record online reflecting the parole.*

b) **If no to having a CBP One appointment, confirm how they entered at a port of entry:**

– *If entered at a land port of entry without an appointment, they may still have been paroled into the United States for one year. Check the NTA and I-94 website as described above to learn more.*

– *If they are Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, or Venezuelan and arrived at an airport, they likely came through the parole processes for these countries and have a financial supporter. They likely received a two-year parole but no NTA. Check the I-94 website as described above.*

5. If no to entering at a port of entry and instead were apprehended by U.S. Border Patrol:

– *Inquire whether they would like to apply for asylum or other protection from removal. Individuals whose asylum application has been pending for 180 days are eligible for employment authorization.*

Appendix C: Lawful Pathways and Work Authorization

Migrants are likely eligible to immediately apply for Employment Authorization Document (EAD) to legally work in the United States if:

- They were recently paroled into the United States through the parole processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, or Venezuelans (CHNV), the Uniting for Ukraine parole process (U4U), or after receiving a CBP One App appointment and presenting at a Port of Entry.
- They have applied for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) by filing a Form I-821.
 - Venezuela: must have continuously resided in the United States on or before July 31, 2023
 - Haiti: must have continuously resided in the United States on or before November 6, 2022
 - Other information available at: <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>
- They have applied for asylum by filing Form I-589, Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal, and the application has been pending for at least 150 days.

Appendix D: USCIS Handout on Important Information About Working Legally in the United States

You are likely eligible to apply for an employment authorization document (EAD) to legally work in the U.S. if:

- You were recently paroled into the U.S. through the parole processes for nationals of Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, or after receiving a CBP One App appointment and presenting at a Port of Entry; or
- You have applied for asylum by filing Form I-589, Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal, and your asylum application has been pending for at least 150 days.

If you have not already started the EAD application process, you can begin by creating a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [account online](#) and filing [Form-I-765, Application for Employment Authorization](#). USCIS will mail your EAD to the address you provided in your EAD application if your Form I-765 is approved.

CREATE AN ACCOUNT AND FILE ONLINE

Submitting your EAD application online provides helpful instructions and tips from USCIS as you complete your form using the [secure online filing system](#). The system also helps you avoid common mistakes, such as leaving critical parts of the application blank or forgetting to sign your name, [check case status](#), and upload evidence. Be sure to review our [How to Create a USCIS Online Account](#) video for more information. Filing an application online is easier than you think. If necessary, you can file a paper application for Form I-765 instead of filing online.

FILING FEES

For those individuals with a pending Form I-589, there is no fee to file your Form I-765 if but you may not file until 150 days after you submit your asylum application.

For those individuals paroled into the U.S., there is a \$410 filing fee. You may apply for a [fee waiver](#).

APPLICATION DETAILS

Items you will need to provide as evidence for your Form I-765 include:

- Either a copy of your stamped Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record (front and back), a printout of your electronic Form I-94, a copy of your passport, or other travel document;
- A copy of your last EAD (if applicable);
- If you were not previously issued an EAD, a copy of a government-issued identity document; and
- Form G-28 (if you are represented by an attorney or accredited representative).

Page 2 of USCIS Handout on Important Information About Working Legally in the United States

If you need to retrieve a copy of your Form I-94, go to <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/recent-search>. If you apply for an EAD, USCIS will notify you of the decision in writing.

If your application is approved, we will either mail your EAD to you or we may require you to visit your local USCIS office to pick it up.

If your address has changed, you must update it. You may do so through your USCIS online account if you filed your form online or by filing a Form AR-11, Alien’s Change of Address Card. For more information on changing your address with USCIS, visit <https://www.uscis.gov/addresschange>.

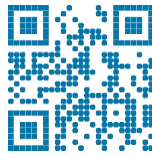
Sign up for an account



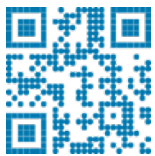
How to Create an Online Account



Check Case Status



Form I-765



Fee Waiver



Address Change



Retrieve your Form I-94



DHS provides flyers online that can be easily downloaded and printed in the “Handouts” section here: <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/important-information-about-working-legally-in-the-united-states>.

Appendix E: Facility Recommendations for Congregate Long-Term Shelter

Space	<p>60 – 80 sq. ft. per person in dormitory area</p> <p>100 sq. ft. per person in dormitory area for people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs using mobility devices, service animals or larger DME items.</p>
Sanitation	<p>Toilets—1 per 20 persons</p> <p>Showers—1 per 25 persons</p> <p>Hygiene Stations—1 per 20 persons</p> <p>Trash Containers—5 pounds of dry waste disposal capability per person/per day</p> <p>Laundry—Capability to meet demands of 33 percent of shelter population</p> <p>Sewage—1.5 gallons of sewage disposal capacity per person/per day</p> <p>Accessible toilets and showers</p>
Comfort Items	<p>Cots—1 per person</p> <p>Blankets—2 per person</p> <p>Pillows—1 per person</p> <p>Towels—2 towels and 2 wash clothes per person/per week</p> <p>Comfort Kits—2 per person/per week</p>

Appendix F: Recommended Areas within a Shelter

- **Registration Area:** Usually positioned near the facility's main entrance. When setting up the registration area:
 - Position several tables and many chairs by the main entrance to receive residents.
 - Allow for one registration worker at each table and enough space for privacy.
 - Set up one table for Health Services and Mental Health Services.
 - Use only one facility entrance, if possible. Position staff at other entrances to direct shelter residents.
- **Dormitory/Sleeping Area**
 - Ability to dim lights.
 - Distance from internal and external traffic.
 - Independent temperature control.
 - Separate spaces for families, women, men and other groups.
- **Feeding:** If meals are produced on site, a commercial kitchen is desirable. If meals are catered, a staging area is needed.
 - Set up a beverage and snack area.
 - Identify sources for food, water, feeding support materials and equipment.
 - Set up dining area that is located away from the dormitory.
 - Post signage that states that no food can be taken to the dormitory area.
 - Plan to offer meals based on several considerations:
 - Availability of food
 - Convenience of procurement
 - Cultural concerns
 - Health condition of shelter residents
 - Snack area: Establish an area where food and beverages will be available 24 hours a day.

- **Children and family areas:** Establish specific areas for the following:
 - Children’s recreation
 - Diaper changing
 - Breast feeding/lactation
 - Bottle washing
 - Temporary respite care—a supervised area for children
- **Quiet/reflection:** Establish lounge and/or recreation areas. Ensure that a quiet area for religious, spiritual, or meditative use is available.
- **Health and mental health services:** Set up separate areas that provide privacy for residents seeking health and/or mental health services.