



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

December 18, 2020

Dear Project Roomkey Partner:

Thank you for all your efforts since April to successfully implement Project Roomkey. Your leadership has saved lives by protecting the health and safety of more than 23,000 of the most vulnerable Californians experiencing homelessness and reducing the spread of COVID-19.

Today, I write to share good news. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has just announced they will no longer require states to submit requests every 30 days to reauthorize reimbursement for non-congregate shelter – and instead FEMA has authorized reimbursement for this life-saving mission through the duration of the COVID-19 emergency. This action serves as acknowledgement of the importance of efforts like Project Roomkey in protecting the most vulnerable Californians and validates all your efforts to implement this first-in-the-nation program.

As the first state to request FEMA reimbursement for non-congregate shelter to respond to COVID-19, we are proud of the efforts and the investments we have taken to protect the health and safety of people experiencing homelessness and limiting their exposure to COVID-19. All told, 55 counties and three tribes have participated in Project Roomkey – consisting of over 300 hotels, 16,000 rooms, and 1,300 trailers spread around the state. FEMA's 75 percent cost share has been instrumental in the success of Project Roomkey – and the State has also provided significant resources to offset local governments' portion of the cost.

Since the pandemic began earlier this year, the State made \$512 million in emergency funding available to support local governments. With this funding, you have been able to expand and sustain Project Roomkey in response to COVID-19, while beginning to transition participants to permanent housing.

The goal of these funds was to ensure the safety of participants during the ongoing public health emergency, ensuring no Project Roomkey clients are

forced out of safe non-congregate shelter and back onto the streets. Today's welcome news from FEMA means we will have that sustained federal commitment through the COVID emergency, as you ultimately work to transition clients into stable housing.

We know, and FEMA has now acknowledged, the need for Project Roomkey is greater than ever. This effort is key in reducing community transmission and addressing hospital surge by providing a safe shelter for those who test positive, who are exposed to COVID-19, or who are at high risk for medical complications were they to become infected, including seniors and those with chronic health conditions.

I again thank you for your leadership in your community – the success of Project Roomkey is truly because of you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Newsom', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gavin Newsom
Governor of California