The COVID-19 public health crisis has put our vulnerable clients at even higher risk and we have adapted quickly to continue to carry out our mission.

Here is how we are currently supporting our clients:

- **Dwight Way Center** has been open 24/7 since March 13th, providing a safe space for 81 clients to shelter in place. As of May 14th, we have been able to decompress our shelters by temporarily transitioning clients to a variety of different accommodations, but are still housing 43 clients at the Dwight Way Center.

- **Our Meals Program** is focusing its efforts on making bag lunches for people living in encampments, as well as making to-go meals for our clients in transitional and permanent supportive housing.

- **Russell Street Residence** continues operations, providing a safe place for 21 clients to shelter in place.

- **Case Managers in our Shelter Plus Care Program** continue to support 33 clients who have transitioned to permanent housing, with weekly telephone check-ins, grocery and medication delivery, and other support.

- **Team Hope** is providing outreach to clients living on the street and providing them hotel rooms to shelter in place. To date 13 clients previously living on the streets have been reached in the cities of Emeryville and Albany.

- **Across six Northern California counties, Roads Home** is also providing outreach to veterans experiencing homelessness to secure safe shelter in hotel rooms. As of May 1st, the VA has removed all restrictions for homeless veterans to qualify for hotel rooms during the COVID-19 outbreak. As of May 10th, 74 clients had been placed in hotel rooms.
PUSHING THROUGH A PANDEMIC TO GET CLIENTS HOUSED

The COVID-19 crisis has presented many challenges to our staff and clients alike, but we have worked even harder to get our clients housed and ensure their health and safety. We are grateful for the continued diligence of our staff as they have adjusted to increased hours and new protocols. That goes, not just for our staff, but the larger team of colleagues that we work with to get our clients into housing. One of our recent success stories highlights just this type of collaboration.

“Lawrence” came to our Veterans Transition Housing program* in April of 2019. He was a young man with a history of housing instability and behavioral issues. Lawrence came to our program with a supportive housing voucher from the VA that could have been used in Contra Costa County. With that in mind, various housing options in that county were identified for him. Lawrence turned them all down. He really wanted to continue to live in Berkeley to stay close to his daughter.

Determined to be near his daughter, Lawrence found himself an apartment in Berkeley that fit the bill! It was then up to our team to get to work. Associate Director of Programs, Angela Upshaw, sat down with Lawrence’s Transitional Housing Case Manager, Romona Shewl, to go over his plan. His housing voucher had to be transferred from Contra Costa County to Alameda County, and that would involve bringing in Tram Le-Nguyen, our Transitional Housing Liaison with the VA, as well as VA Case Manager Jai De Lotto and VA Housing Specialist Laura Rasmussen. The team worked to guarantee Lawrence would be able to use his housing voucher in Berkeley, but they knew it would take a long time for it to go into effect, so in the meantime, our Roads Home program worked to make sure Lawrence could cover his rent right away. Roads Home Case Manager, Jessica Mitchell did an intake with him and got him set up with Temporary Financial Assistance from the VA, which will cover his rent until the housing voucher can take effect.

This occurred right after Shelter in Place orders went into effect which created another hurdle when it came to Lawrence viewing the apartment and signing the lease. Jessica worked closely with the landlord to ensure social distancing and safety precautions were taken in order for Lawrence to secure his apartment.

Lawrence signed his lease almost exactly a year after he first entered our transitional housing program, and within one week he was moved in to his new home!

Here at BFHP we are truly grateful for our dedicated staff and our supportive colleagues at the VA. If it weren’t for their willingness to collaborate, there’s no way we could do the work that we do!

*Veteran’s Transitional Housing will be moving to the Hope Center, when completed.
The Berkeley Way Project – to be built at 2012 Berkeley Way (between Shattuck and Milvia) – is a joint development between Berkeley Food & Housing Project and BRIDGE Housing. Our goal is to create a continuum of affordable and very low-income housing that is integrated into the fabric of a vibrant downtown community, rich in transit and services. This development is significant for the unprecedented way it combines a range of housing opportunities.

Kudos from Veterans Affairs on "Lawrence's" case:

"Berkeley Food and Housing Project was recognized by staff at VA Northern California Health Care System for 'seamless collaboration' in helping the VA team navigate through a complex housing search and placement process to assist a Veteran with a HUD-VASH voucher. The two teams worked together to support the Veteran with some complicated issues and found a way to view rental properties safely; their hard work allowed the Veteran to move into his HUD-VASH unit quickly."

*Veteran's Transitional Housing will be moving to the Hope Center, when completed.

BERKELEY WAY HOPE CENTER

In partnership with BRIDGE Housing, Berkeley Way is the largest housing project for homeless and low income residents in the City of Berkeley.

186

PEOPLE SERVED EACH NIGHT
89 units of affordable housing
53 units of permanent supportive housing
32 shelter beds
12 transitional housing bed for veterans

HOUSING INFUSION
Designed to serve Berkeley's very low-income, disabled, & chronically homeless population through innovative integration of housing and on-site support services

ON-SITE SERVICES
Medical care
Mental health
Community health meals
Wellness groups

$120M

FUNDING SOURCES
$27M provided by the City of Berkeley
$93M from State & County funds

TIMELINE
Groundbreaking is on track for later this year with estimated completion in early 2022. Visit our website to learn more!

bfhp.org
MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER

You're Invited!

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

Friday, May 29, 2020
10:00 – 11:00 am

Join Executive Director, Calleene Egan and Berkely Mayor, Jesse Arreguín via Zoom as they discuss our response to COVID-19, the upcoming Berkeley Way groundbreaking, and other agency news

Please RSVP to calendar@bfhp.org to receive the login link