What challenges face people who are marginally housed or homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- They may have to use shelters, where it is harder to practise physical distancing.
- They are more likely than others to have medical conditions that increase the chance of negative outcomes.
- They are more likely to have mental health conditions that can increase stress and lead to a mental health crisis.
- They may have poor access to transportation and social and medical support, making it harder to protect them from infection, and diagnose and treat illness.

What can my agency do to support people who are marginally housed or homeless during the pandemic?

- Coordinate with your local government and other service providers on a pandemic plan. Share supports and resources.
- Be prepared for an increase in the number of people using shelters.
- Have infection control and environmental cleaning processes in place.
- Develop a plan to identify, test and support people with COVID-19 symptoms.
• Create spaces for people with mild COVID-19 symptoms to recover.
• Identify additional supports, such as mental health services or alcohol and other drug supports, that may be needed.
• Make sure staff are taking care of their own physical and mental health.
• See the list of resources below for more in-depth strategies.

**What tips can I give to people who are marginally housed or homeless to help them stay safe during the pandemic?**

• Reinforce that feeling extra stress is normal, and suggest talking to a trusted person.
• Encourage them to seek out credible information about the virus.
• Remind them to use their everyday coping skills.
• Suggest how they can adapt public health advice to best protect their physical health.
• Provide information on what to do if they are at risk of losing their housing.

**Resources for community organizations**

These resources give recommendations for reducing the risks of COVID-19 among people experiencing homelessness:

• https://www.homelesshub.ca/