



Frequently Asked Questions

Field House at the War Memorial Temporary Emergency Shelter

April 16, 2020

The second phase of the Temporary Emergency Shelter at the War Memorial Recreation Center is scheduled to open on Friday, April 17. The Field House is a dedicated area at the shelter that will provide dining, daytime services, and overnight shelter for Cambridge residents experiencing homelessness who test negative for COVID-19. The Field House, which will be staffed by Bay Cove/CASPAR, has ample space to ensure physical distancing among residents.

Who can stay at the Field House shelter?

The Field House is a dedicated area at the War Memorial Temporary Emergency Shelter that will provide dining, daytime services and overnight shelter for Cambridge residents experiencing homelessness who have tested negative for COVID-19.

At this time, the Field House shelter will open in stages due to the availability of testing kits. Initially, the Field House will be open to residents staying at the Warming Center who test negative for COVID-19. Next week, additional testing will take place for residents staying at the CASPAR Emergency Services Center on Albany Street. Individuals who test negative will then have the option of staying at the Field House.

The Field House will not be open to the general public. Shelter residents will need to be referred by local homeless shelters in Cambridge and tested for COVID-19 in order to access the site.

How will referred individuals get tested?

Referred individuals from the Warming Center were tested on April 16 and referred individuals from the CASPAR shelter will be tested next week. Staff from Pro EMS, the city's contracted ambulance service, will be conducting the tests. The Broad Institute is providing the testing supplies and analyzing samples in its laboratory.

Can people experiencing homelessness who are NOT affiliated with the Warming Center or CASPAR shelter get tested through this program?

Initially, only those experiencing homelessness and who are affiliated with the Warming Center or CASPAR shelter on Albany Street will be tested. There may be testing at additional shelter sites in the future.



How long will it take for test results to come back?

24 to 48 hours.

Where will residents be staying while they await their results?

A separate physical space is available at the temporary emergency shelter for individuals that need to be quarantined while awaiting COVID-19 test results. Unique to the War Memorial site is the ability to provide quarantine space without entering the building, since individuals will be housed in a temporary setting on the lower level. This will allow for easy and safe access to care and transport.

Residents testing negative for COVID-19, will be released to the Field House, while those who test positive will be taken to a regional isolation center administered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. If a resident becomes symptomatic prior to the test results, they will be taken to the regional facility for isolation, as well.

Is the testing the same as what is being conducted at the skilled nursing and assisted living facilities?

The Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT is working with Pro EMS to conduct these tests for shelter residents and staff using the [same rapid testing surveillance method](#) currently being used at the seven skilled nursing and assisted living facilities in Cambridge.

Who will be staffing the Field House?

The Field House will be managed by Bay Cove/CASPAR staff who will be tested, as well.