Modesto Safe Ground Homeless Vision

Modesto City Councilmembers Eric Alvarez, Nick Bavaro and Chris Ricci

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**What is Safe Ground:**

Safe Ground pilot program is a housing referral focused program that provides a secure location for people currently experiencing homelessness in Modesto. This model reduces the negative impacts and public health and safety concerns of unregulated encampments on local businesses and residents by providing basic services such as portable toilets, mobile showers, and trash disposal bins in addition to case management, service referrals and housing placements. Each Safe Ground participant is provided with a shelter unit and a cot, two meals a day, snacks and bottled water. Meals, snacks and bottled water will be provided by non-profit organizations who feed the homeless and coordinated through the site service provider.

**Safe Ground Location:**

Safe Ground pilot program location needs to be in an area that’s least disruptive to businesses and residents and where services are readily available. Safe Ground will be secured with a fence with two entry areas with private security in city- and county- approved locations.

**How Many Homeless Will Safe Ground Hold:**

The temporary Safe Ground pilot program capacity will be determined by site availability.

**Safe Ground Rules:**

Safe Ground pilot program is not a permanent destination, and all participants work with a case manager towards exiting to transitional or permanent housing as it becomes available. Participants’ expectations are to maintain a safe environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Safe Ground pilot program follows a low-barrier, harm-reduction model to be as inclusive as possible. Weapons, drugs and alcohol are not allowed onsite. Participants found with drugs or alcohol will be asked to dispose of the items or take them offsite. Campfires or BBQ equipment are not permitted on the Safe Ground pilot program. Participants may bring minimal items that will fit inside their unit. Additional storage of belongings is available as capacity allows.

**Safe Ground Admission Process:**

Safe Ground pilot program is designed to be as low-barrier as possible while maintaining the safety of all participants and personnel. Couples and single adults 18 years of age and older are eligible for Safe Ground. Admission to Safe Ground will be determined by qualified staff and volunteers on the ground and will be behavioral based and predicated on potential for movement forward. While pets are accommodated at the temporary Safe Ground pilot site, the number of license pets is limited to one per participant.

**Admission Criteria:**

To be eligible, the person must be willing to work towards a transitional housing plan and be able to start managing their activities of daily living such as helping keep the site neat, orderly and peaceful. The selection approval process must go through the service provider with the recommendations of at least three local homeless advocates/professionals. Vehicle and RV parking is not available in the Safe Ground pilot program location.

**Amenities and Services at Safe Ground:**

· Safe Camp participants will be provided with a shelter unit (tent, pallet, or similar).

· Participants can bring minimal possessions that fit within their unit.

· Staffing and private security (non-MPD) personnel are on site 24 hours per day.

· Shaded area with tables, benches and cooling are available.

· Portable toilets, showers, and trash disposal bins are provided.

· Charging stations for electronic devices in designated area.

· Meals, snacks, beverages and bottled water provided by non-profit organizations.

**Safe Ground Resources:**

Stanislaus County and other entities will provide financial resources and the City of Modesto will provide city property for Safe Ground pilot program. Requests for Proposals will be issued for service providers; Modesto’s City Manager and Stanislaus County’s CEO will recommend service providers to their elected body for approval.