

## COVID-19 EMERGENCY APPEAL FOR FUNDS

The Denis Hurley Centre is working in partnership with We Are Durban and other NGOs to support the eThekweni Homeless Task Team's response for COVID-19.

We are appealing for funds to help with the on-going support of the emergency camps and shelters that have been set up for at least 1,700 homeless people in central Durban.

**Our target is R1.785M or the equivalent of R50 per person per day for the 21 days of the lock down.**

eThekweni Municipality, under the extraordinary leadership of Deputy Mayor Belinda Scott, has led this project and been the principal funder for setting up and supervising the shelters. NGOs are being enormously generous in providing food and City Department of Health are about to start a major healthcare programme for those in the shelters. These together mean that the basic necessities are in place. The appeal is to provide funds for additional goods, services and support for the 3-week period.

In summary the targets are as follows (with further information below):

Focus Area	Target Amount	Equivalent
Basic medication	R 350,000	R69 per person per week
Withdrawal medication	R 200,000	R40 per person per week
Additional food items	R 500,000	R98 per person per week
Hygiene products	R 335,000	R66 per person per week
Recreational items	R 75,000	R1,470 per 100 people pw
Volunteer expenses	R 227,000	R4,450 per 100 people pw
ID applications	R98,000	R140 per person (700 people)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>R1,785,000</b>	<b>R50 per person per day</b>

## Background

In his historic speech on 23 March 2020, President Ramaphosa set a requirement for all cities, that 'temporary shelters that meet the necessary hygiene standards will be identified for homeless people'. It was wonderful that he remembered the homeless - but this set a serious challenge to organisations like the Denis Hurley Centre and other members of the National Homeless Network.

In Durban, an unprecedented collaboration between departments of Municipal and Provincial Government, corporates and NGOs enabled the screening of over 2,000 homeless people at the Durban Exhibition Centre during the first 3 days of the lockdown. In this Durban was ahead of any other city in the country and ensured that homeless people were off the streets and inside protected environments sooner than any other marginalised group.

All were screened for COVID-19 and for other health issues, and also underwent individual intake processes by the Department of Social Development (including an addiction assessment). Since some of the 2,000 were repeats, and some people managed to travel home, in the end 1,700 have been assigned to designated emergency shelters, each with dedicated security, as follows:

- Sick, disabled and elderly women to the YMCA building
- Sick, disabled and elderly men to the Denis Hurley Centre building
- Healthy women and children to the Municipality's Strollers building at Mansel Road
- Healthy men to tented camps (in groups of 100) in parks and car parks around the CBD

All those in lockdown have access to overnight shelter, water and toilets. The vast majority have received mattresses and blankets supplied by the Municipality and some NGOs. They are served at least 3 meals a day, have access to healthcare and have open space to ensure recreation and healthy living. While the locations are enclosed and guarded by Metro Police and private security, everyone is held voluntarily and there has been no coercion in the process.

The appeal for R1.785M is to supplement the needs of the homeless with target amounts as follows:

R350,000 for basic medication: basic pain killers, anti-biotics, wound-dressing. The target is the equivalent of R69 per person per week.

The Denis Hurley Centre clinic has an established reputation of providing specialised healthcare for the homeless (seeing almost 30,000 poor urban patients a year). The DHC clinic, working with other partners, has initiated and led the primary healthcare aspect of this project. Going forwards the City Department of Health will be recruiting and deploying teams of enrolled nurses to ensure a constant healthcare presence at the shelters.



While some medication will come through DoH we know from our own experience that these supplies are often limited and there will be demand from other sectors of society. The DHC will purchase and oversee the provision of primary medication for use by its own team and by the City nurses to ensure the smooth running of the healthcare programme.

R200,000 for withdrawal medication: higher-level pain killers, immodium, anti-histamine, etc. The target is the equivalent of R40 per person per week.

The Denis Hurley Centre clinic working closely with DUT Urban Futures and other volunteer experts has been assessing the needs of homeless substance-users as they go into withdrawal. Many are regular smokers, drinkers and, unfortunately, users of whoonga (a low grade heroin that is mixed with other substances and smoked).

Clearly being in lock down means that users do not have access to their usual supplies – and in any case do not have the money to purchase so they are necessarily going into withdrawal. When first told about the lockdown, a number of homeless people spontaneously said that they welcomed this as an opportunity to reduce their substance dependency.

Again, the DHC will purchase and oversee the provision of withdrawal medication for use by its own team and by the City nurses to ensure the smooth running of the addiction-response programme.

R500,000 for additional food needs: dry goods such as maize meal, sugar, beans, rice; sugared sweets; fresh fruit etc. The target is the equivalent of R98 per person per week.

The basic food needs of those in the shelters have been met since they first arrived at the screening centre. We now have a system in place with a Christian NGO ('Siphangomusa') providing porridge for breakfast, the Hindu-led Pavilion Hotel providing lunch and 'Feed the Poor' (with other Muslim charities) providing dinner. (To complete the set, the Jewish Club are providing refreshments for the workers at the camps).

In addition to this, a large number of smaller organisations and members of the public have been offering help with food and they are being used to supplement the basic provision and also substitute where previous feeding schemes are no longer operating. The additional need for food is thus not substantial. This part of the fund is aimed at purchasing supplies in advance (esp for porridge) and also supplementing with specialist items. The Denis Hurley Centre's experience in serving food for the homeless (about 100,00 meals each year) has helped us to keep assessing what is needed and we will use this money to purchase and oversee items that can be used by the feeding schemes.



R335,000 for hygiene items: soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, detergent, anti-septic, hand sanitiser, laundry tubs, etc). The target is the equivalent of R66 per person per week.

A major emphasis to avoid the risk of infection has been on personal hygiene and this is also important for other health reasons and to maintain personal dignity. Offers of goods will be welcome in this category as well as cash to supplement what is not donated. The DHC working with the supplies management at Moses Mabida Stadium (a key partner in the project) will oversee the fair distribution of these goods through the site managers to the residents of the shelters.

R75,000 for recreational items: footballs, art products, writing materials, woodwork, gardening etc). The target is the equivalent of R1,470 per week per group of 100 people (which is the 'operating unit' for the shelters).

As many people are now experiencing, lockdown can be a very dull period and this is no less true for the hundreds in the camps than for those sitting in their comfortable homes: except that our guys do not have Netflix to get through the long three weeks! The more bored people are, the more likely they are to wander out of the camps, or become restless and hard to control.

We are grateful to Independent Newspapers who are arranging for the daily provision of English and Zulu-language papers to the shelters (*Daily News* and *Isolezwe*); the DHC's Street Lit programme has provided well-selected boxes of books; we have challenged East Coast Radio to provide radio facilities; we are talking to AV companies about the possibility of mobile film screenings.

We would use this fund to purchase other items that can also help reduce boredom while still being conscious of the need to reduce the risk of infection (e.g. the preference for football over rugby or basketball). Again, the DHC will oversee the fair distribution of these goods through the site managers to the residents of the shelters.

R98,000 for replacement identity documents: R140 per person for a replacement ID from Dept of Home Affairs (new ones are free). The target is to obtain replacement IDs for 700 people.

The HSRC survey conducted with the homeless in Durban in 2016 showed that almost 50% do not have ID documents even though they are South African citizens. This is often because personal possessions have been lost or stolen – sadly sometimes stolen in random raids by the police.

An exercise conducted by the DHC before the May 2019 general election helped obtain documents for several hundred and get them registered as



voters. But we know that there are still many others who need ID's. Without these, they cannot obtain grants if they are entitled to them, and also would struggle further to find work. What is more their sense of being citizens is undermined – they are technically non-people.

The process of obtaining an ID is not easy, especially with homeless people whose lives are chaotic and who may struggle with some of the forms. The DHC has set up a system with the local Dept of Home Affairs branch by which DHC does most of the pre-work to expedite the completion by DHA. The time in which the homeless are in lockdown is a perfect opportunity to collect the data needed and complete forms (using volunteers)

R227,000 for volunteer expenses: fuel, data/ airtime, small stipends. The target is the equivalent of R4,450 per week per group of 100 people (which is the 'operating unit' for the shelters).

There are a number of ways in which we plan to use volunteers to help us with this work and We Are Durban who are specialists in managing volunteers will oversee this. All volunteers will be screened, briefed and coordinated by a specialist in that area; they will also be required to sign an indemnity. There are already a large number of people volunteering with the food distribution programmes; the key areas of additional volunteering identified are:

- Doctors, nurses and medical auxiliaries to work with and complement the DHC mobile clinic and the City Health nurses
- Social workers and counsellors to provide support for addiction and other issues
- Chaplains, from all faith communities, to provide spiritual and pastoral support
- Health accompaniers to drive identified people to hospital and wait with them
- Admin volunteers to help people complete ID forms
- Communications supporters to help people in shelters phone or send messages to their families

Whilst we anticipate that most volunteers will not request funding, we are also aware that many people are not being paid at this time and so the ability to subsidise some of the expenses would help us deploy more volunteers.

The list above, is of course, not exhaustive but a few days after setting up the shelters and establishing the basic protocols for how they are run, this is our best estimate of the needs at this time. Of course, this also assumes that the lock down only lasts the 21 days originally announced and, if it is extended, we would have to review the situation and the appeal.



Financial donations can be made to the Denis Hurley Centre which all parties involved have decided is the best way to ensure efficient and transparent collection of funds. This can be done using Zapper, Payfast (for credit cards) or EFT to the following bank details:

Bank: FNB Account name: Denis Hurley Centre Trust  
Account number 6220 4261 002 Branch code 22-21-26.

Please use the reference 'COVID' and your name. If you do make a donation, please email [leanne@denishurleycentre.org](mailto:leanne@denishurleycentre.org) so we know who has donated and for what focus area (we do not receive that information with the bank notification). Financial donations from individuals and corporates will receive 18a tax certificates at the end of the tax year (March 2021).

If you wish to donate goods in kind, please contact us directly to discuss how and where. Donations of goods will be monetized so that their value can be included towards the overall target. Donations of goods from company inventory may also qualify for an 18a tax certificate.

Please, no matter how well intentioned, do not deliver goods of any kind directly to the shelters without contacting us first. [leanne@denishurleycentre.org](mailto:leanne@denishurleycentre.org). If you want to know more about volunteering contact [volunteer@wearedurban.com](mailto:volunteer@wearedurban.com).

Everyone is anxious about the virus but we are conscious that our homeless fellow-Durbanites are more vulnerable than many to the implications of COVID. On behalf of the 1,700 homeless men, women and children whom we are trying to protect – and the many organisations working together in this project – we thank you for your consideration and generosity.

