

Safe Parking Program Proposed Encinitas Lot FAQ

Q: What is the Jewish Family Service “Safe Parking Program”?

A: The Safe Parking Program helps individuals and families who are living in their vehicles by providing a safe and secure place to sleep. The program operates seven days a week from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. – while also providing vital resources and tools, dignified support, and a welcoming environment to help individuals and families stabilize their lives and transition back into housing. We provide clients with access to bathrooms, handwashing stations, meals/food, benefits assistance, career coaching, financial literacy, parenting classes, and children’s services. Clients meet with housing specialists to develop an action plan with an emphasis on finding stable housing solutions.

The people we assist are often experiencing homelessness for the first time, including: veterans, older adults (over the age of 55), college students, and families with young children.

Q: Why does Encinitas need a Safe Parking Program lot?

A: The 2018 San Diego Regional Task Force on the Homeless Point in Time Count identified 1,975 individuals experiencing homelessness in North County – of which, 354 are living out of their vehicles, including 51 in Encinitas. A “[Shelter Crisis](#)” was also recently declared by the City of Encinitas and with the lack of affordable housing in the region, the City’s leaders are considering opening a Safe Parking lot in the area to serve North County residents.

In July of this year, Jewish Family Service received a \$256,000 grant through the California Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) to open a Safe Parking Program lot in North County. If this lot is not launched by the end of 2019, the funding will be forfeited back to the State and could jeopardize future State support in North County. And the 51 individuals currently parking on the streets will continue to do so without resources to help them move back into stable housing.

Through this State funding and private philanthropy, this Safe Parking Program lot will operate at no cost to Encinitas residents.

Q: Why is Jewish Family Service being considered to operate this safe parking lot?

A: JFS is an experienced Safe Parking Program provider, and currently operates three safe parking lots within the City of San Diego. Since beginning in 2017, JFS’s Safe Parking Program has served 1,529 individuals, and in the last year, 42% of individuals exiting the Safe Parking Program have significantly improved their circumstances – including finding permanent housing. This program model is recognized nationwide as an innovative and successful solution to address homelessness.

Q: Who are the people in the Safe Parking Program?

A: Most people in the Safe Parking Program have a source of income, have a job/looking for work, and just need a little assistance to get themselves and their family back on their feet and into a home. The program is not intended to serve the chronic homeless population. It is designed to interrupt the downward spiral of homelessness for individuals and families who are working hard to return to living in a place of their own.

The majority of our clients struggle with housing affordability, often due to the loss of a job, medical hardship, reduction in work hours, or any other unexpected financial challenge. The goal of the program is to find housing they can manage within their income. On average, most people are in the program for less than 120 days.

Q: How do you ensure community safety?

A: There will be nightly onsite security. All participants must have a working vehicle and must be able to operate it safely, which includes not using alcohol and drugs. All adults in the program are run through the Megan's Law database and the National Sex Offender Registry for safety and security.

Q: Will a Safe Parking lot in Encinitas bring more homeless people to this area?

A: With only 25 available spaces, the Encinitas lot will prioritize and focus on vulnerable families, college students and older adults currently living in their vehicles within the City of Encinitas and North County. JFS will work with the City of Encinitas, the Sheriff's Department, and the Community Resource Center to establish effective referral pathways to the Safe Parking Program for individuals living in their vehicles within the City of Encinitas.

Through our current work, we know that families and individuals in the Safe Parking Program do not have the resources for a long daily commute. This means people stay in close proximity to their places of employment and school.

Q: Where will the Encinitas lot be located?

A: The currently proposed location is The Leichtag Foundation at 441 Saxony Road.