

MARCH 26, 2020

## CHRISTIAN CAMPS COULD PROVIDE A SOLUTION

If you're like everybody else in Citygate Network, you're wondering where to physically put people now that social distancing guidelines have cut down on the number allowed to be housed together. We know that you have student/clients staying with you. You're also seeing an influx of new guests who have run out of resources. In addition, you're trying to figure out how to handle people with possible health concerns and keep them separate. The bottom line is, you need more room—and probably more staff. If city officials or local businesses haven't made other facilities available, this is a major dilemma for you.

HERE IS A CREATIVE SOLUTION: Citygate Network has engaged with [Christian Camp and Conference Association](#) (CCCA) about using camps and conference centers for accommodation assistance. These places have beds. They have showers. They have kitchens and dining rooms. They have classrooms. They have chapels. They have open space and athletic fields. They are remote (away from population centers). And, for the most part, they are sitting empty right now: no weekend retreats, no midweek outdoor education programs, and the prospects for a full summer camping season are dimming every day. This could be an amazing collaboration opportunity.

THERE ARE TWO POSSIBILITIES: To open up beds at your place, you might consider moving your program people out of your main facility and have them operate at a nearby Christian camp or conference center for the foreseeable future. There would likely be some initial logistical hitches to work out, but once handled, it could work very smoothly. Or you might consider placing homeless guests—some of your regulars—in a remote location for a two- or three-week period to cut down on the strain at your place and ease the staffing burden. Transportation could be a roadblock, but a lot of camps have buses and vans.

Dr. Robert Marbut from the [U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness](#) (USICH) loves this idea. We even talked about it today on a USICH call with staff from HHS, HUD, CDC, the VA, the Red Cross, the White House and other agencies on the line. Our office is talking with FEMA right now to see what funding might be available to cover costs.

CCCA is asking its members to consider working with a Citygate Network organization near them. Naturally, our CCCA friends at the local level will have a lot of questions. We have tried to answer as many as possible up front.

**BUT THINK ABOUT IT:** If partnerships could be established, it would significantly help the members of both associations while blessing homeless people in need with a wonderful alternative. Who knows what could come from this!

You might already know the leaders at a Christian camp or conference center near you and you might already have a relationship. If not, [go to this website](#) and see what CCCA member organization is located within a reasonable drive. Make a call.

With what might still be coming, USICH is saying that they would really like our members in California, Oregon, Washington, New York, Ohio, and Michigan to consider doing this.

Let us know how we can help facilitate the relationship.