

## Program Overview, Hours and Location:

### **1. Q: What is the Jewish Family Service “Safe Parking Program”?**

**A:** The Safe Parking Program helps individuals and families living in their vehicles by providing a safe and secure place to sleep seven days a week. Lots are secured through controlled entry during certain hours granted only to program participants, Safe Parking Program staff and security. The program provides 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 participants with basic needs: access to bathrooms, handwashing stations, hygiene supplies and meals/food (based on donations).

The program is more than just a safe place to park; participants meet regularly with case managers to develop an action plan with an emphasis on finding stable housing solutions, which could include additional supports like benefits assistance, career coaching, financial literacy, parenting classes and children’s services.

The Vista Safe Parking Program Lot has 25 parking spaces for program participants. The program includes on-site services through case managers, lead case managers and program supervisors. The lot is scheduled to open in mid-August.

The Vista Safe Parking Program hours are 6 p.m. to 7 a.m.; it will be an overnight lot for parking and sleeping, with participants leaving each day and returning each evening. Participants are vetted off-site prior to being allowed entry into the program.

### **2. Q: Who are the people in the Safe Parking Program?**

**A:** 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. Most people in the Safe Parking Program have a source of income, have a job or are 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 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.

*Examples of the people who have benefited from Safe Parking Program lots include:*

- Community college students trying to make ends meet, while prioritizing their education.
- Families who have fallen on hard times due to an unanticipated medical bill and need to get connected to resources.
- Recently transitioned veterans who are struggling to navigate their next steps and find a new job.

### **3. Q: How many cars will the Safe Parking Program lot in Vista serve?**

**A:** The Vista Safe Parking Program will serve 25 vehicles/households at once. When participants exit the program, we enroll a new eligible, vetted individual/household into the available space. No RVs, motorcycles or camper style vehicles will be allowed. RVs are allowed at the Safe Parking Program site in Mission Valley in the City of San Diego. All vehicles must be in operable condition. In the last year, in other lots, there was an average of two people per vehicle.

### **4. Q: When will the Vista Safe Parking Program open?**

**A:** The program is scheduled to start enrollment and open in mid-August.

## Vista Safe Parking Program Lot FAQ



**5. Q: Where is the Vista Safe Parking Program located?**

**A:** The Vista program is located at the Vista Civic Center in a portion of the parking lot. The site was selected and is owned and operated by the City of Vista.

**6. Q: Why is Jewish Family Service operating this safe parking lot?**

**A:** JFS is an experienced Safe Parking Program provider and currently operates four safe parking lots within the City of San Diego and one in the City of Encinitas.

### **Program Enrollment and Services:**

**7. Q: How are participants screened for enrollment into the Safe Parking Program?**

**A:** Individuals and families living in their vehicles may call our Safe Parking Program phone line (858-637-3373) or inquire via the [JFS website](https://jfssd.org/safeparking) (jfssd.org/safeparking) to learn about the program. Participants must be 18 or older, or minors accompanied by adult caregivers. Enrollment for the Vista program will begin in early August. JFS case managers meet with clients individually over the phone and screen for eligibility in advance of any entry to the lot, informing those interested that they must have a working vehicle, must follow the program guidelines, and will be required to meet regularly with a case manager to create a plan to achieve more permanent housing. All adults are run through the Megan's Law database and the National Sex Offender Registry, as well as an active warrant check.

Once deemed eligible, participants are scheduled to meet with a case manager in person to complete the official intake paperwork, provide picture IDs and sign the Safe Parking Program Guidelines. Participants must go through this assessment before being allowed entry to the lot.

**8. Q: What are the program hours?**

**A:** The Vista Safe Parking Program hours are 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. for overnight accommodations. Participants may come in during entry hours, and can leave the lot at any time. It will not be open during the day.

**9. Q: What amenities will be available?**

**A:** Available amenities will include portable restrooms (including ADA accessible facilities) and a handwashing station, trash receptacles, and overnight security. Case managers are also on-site to assist with transitional and long-term housing solutions, which may include additional supports such as benefits assistance, career coaching, financial literacy, parenting classes and children's services.

**10. Q: Are there restrictions on drug and alcohol use?**

**A:** Drug and/or alcohol use is not permitted in the Safe Parking Program. Illegal drug use will result in immediate disqualification from the program.

**11. Q: What happens if someone who is not enrolled in Safe Parking shows up and wants to park?**

**A:** Safe Parking staff manage entry to ensure only pre-enrolled Safe Parking participants enter the lot only during the allowed entry hours. For anyone expressing interest in enrollment, Safe Parking staff will direct them to call our Safe Parking Program phone line so that they can speak to a case manager who will assess their eligibility for future enrollment in any of the available lots. Anyone who is turned away will be advised they may not park in the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

**12. Q: Is there a time limit for participants in the program?**

**A:** The goal of the program is to help participants find housing that they can manage within their income. There are no maximum time limits to enrollment. Case managers review attendance regularly to ensure active individuals/households maintain their space in the program, while reopening spaces of anyone not

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actively using services. Participants who are continuing to meet with JFS case managers are welcome to stay in the Safe Parking Program as they make progress on their plan to achieve more stable housing.

**13. Q: Do participants pay to park?**

**A:** No, there is no fee to park nightly. Safe Parking is a *free* service for eligible, enrolled participants who agree to actively seek more stable housing.

**14. Q: Does the program allow camping in personally owned trailers or otherwise?**

**A:** The Safe Parking Program is not a “safe camping” program. The program does not allow for camping of any kind. It is a program that serves a unique population who are often experiencing homelessness for the first time and have a vehicle that they are currently living out of.

### **Program Review:**

**15. Q: What are the current outcomes of the Safe Parking Program?**

**A:** In JFS’s Safe Parking Program, we have verified that more than one-third of clients moved into more stable housing. Many of the remainder move on to similar circumstances, although we are not informed directly, so we are unable to track and verify for data reporting purposes.

Overall, the program has assisted 3,941 individuals/2,847 households since beginning operation on Jan. 1, 2018.

**16. Q: How can the community engage in the Vista Safe Parking Program? Are there donation/volunteer opportunities?**

**A:** Community Engagement meetings will be held by the City of Vista prior to the program start date. Please check the City of Vista website for the latest information.

When the program opens, if you are interested in volunteering, we invite you, along with your community group, friends or colleagues to host and serve dinner for the Safe Parking Program Participants. You can find out more and sign up at [www.jfssd.org/safeparking](http://www.jfssd.org/safeparking) or email [safeparkingdinners@jfssd.org](mailto:safeparkingdinners@jfssd.org) or call (858) 637-3050. Monetary donations are also welcome at [www.jfssd.org/donate](http://www.jfssd.org/donate).

**17. How long will the program run?**

**A:** The program, as approved by the City Council, will run for one year, with three additional one-year renewal periods available.

**18. Q: Will there be on-site security? When?**

**A:** Security will be on-site overnight from 5:30 p.m. to 7 a.m. daily, with additional Civic Center security from the start of the program to 11 p.m.

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