



## Statement on Unlawful Sober Living Homes

Sept. 28, 2023

The City of Tempe supports properly licensed and regulated sober living homes that are professionally and responsibly operated in compliance with city, county and state laws and regulations as well as any Homeowners Association covenants, conditions and restrictions. These homes can play a vital role in addressing residents' needs, supporting their recovery from addiction and assisting them with a successful transition back into society. Operators of these homes can and should be community partners.

State investigations into unlawful sober living homes have raised serious concerns about the health, safety and well-being of vulnerable residents and the larger Tempe community. The Tempe City Council, out of deep concern for those in need and in support of criminal investigations, wishes to send a clear message that the City of Tempe is actively working to assist state authorities, enforce our city codes and ordinances and, importantly, help residents who have been victimized. When residents are at their most vulnerable, whether battling addiction, experiencing homelessness or both, the city will marshal all of its legal tools and resources available to protect those in need and prevent future victimization.

With the support of the Tempe City Council, a multi-department task force convened by city leadership is actively working to address unlawful sober living homes in Tempe. To date, this important work has included:

- Bringing together the expertise of multiple city departments to protect the community, including Community Health and Human Services, Neighborhoods, Tempe Police Department, Tempe Fire Medical Rescue and Code Enforcement.
- Creating an internal process for identifying possible fraud by providers to enhance our communication and response.
- Filing multiple complaints with state authorities about potentially fraudulent operators. We are continually looking for and reporting any suspected instances of fraud.
- Ensuring that properties are operating in compliance with city code and regulatory licenses.
- Connecting those victims who were part of an American Indian Health Program billing scheme to the organizations overseeing the state's crisis response.
- Assisting other victims not connected to a tribe, who were largely homeless, with shelter and other resources provided by the city and community partners.
- Regularly meeting with state authorities, and local partners such as Tempe Elementary School District and the nonprofit Solari Crisis and Human Services for a collaborative, coordinated response.

With intention, the City of Tempe and Tempe City Council are working to care for our most vulnerable community members, protect our residents, keep our community safe and strong, and hold operators of unlawful sober living homes accountable.

The Tempe City Council encourages anyone who may be a victim or is aware of potential victims to report abuse. The state has set up a dedicated hotline for anyone who has been impacted by the closures of sober living homes. Call 2-1-1 and press 7 to report abuse or get information.

[tempe.gov/SoberLivingHomes](https://tempe.gov/SoberLivingHomes)