



Greetings,

As you are aware, our most recent winter weather brought some extreme temperatures this year and it had a significant impact on our neighbors experiencing homelessness in Whatcom County. After this winter season the community expressed a need for severe weather shelter facilities, outside of the available winter shelters.

The Health Department is reaching out to valued partners, who may be willing to consider providing short-term overnight shelter services during severe weather this coming winter. These services include shelter space, personnel, or both if capability exists. These shelters would be opened when certain thresholds are met and extra capacity is needed, but are not expected to be run nightly throughout the winter months. A set of guiding assumptions for these severe weather shelters is attached for your review, yet can be modified to fit the capacity of the partner offering services.

Partners may choose to serve only particular populations for which they are most capable of serving. The more vulnerable populations to consider serving during severe weather include: families with young children, medically fragile individuals, couples, and youth. Other smaller sub-populations would be welcome as well. We are looking for partners able to provide their available resources and realize that you may only have staff or space, or possibly both.

We are looking for a variety of solutions and hope to identify partners who have a track record of positive community collaborations and are able to adhere to sound fiscal accounting practices. Whatcom County is able to offer support for partners interested in operating a severe weather shelter during the coming winter. This support includes connecting organizations with trained individuals who can act as volunteer leads during the nights shelters are open, financial assistance to purchase bottled water and packaged snacks, as well as possible custodial support.

Please let us know if you would like to discuss providing severe weather shelter services. We hope to begin working with potential partners very soon and would appreciate hearing from you by September 13th.

Sincerely,
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