



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Whatcom County, City of Bellingham coordinating winter emergency homeless shelters
Shelters will operate at various locations throughout Bellingham

BELLINGHAM, WA— Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham are coordinating with several nonprofit, community and faith-based organizations to ensure shelter services are available this winter.

During winter months, existing shelter options may reach capacity when weather conditions make it unsafe for people to remain outdoors at night. At those times, there is a need for additional safe, warm spaces for shelter. To add capacity during the winter months, several new resources have been made available in addition to year-round shelters:

- Overnight shelter for up to **40 women per night at Civic Stadium**, funded by the City of Bellingham and operated by the Opportunity Council.
- Overnight shelter for up to **35 youth at First Congregational Church of Bellingham**, funded in part by the City of Bellingham and operated by Northwest Youth Services. Opening is contingent upon final approval by the congregation.
- Short-term, overnight shelters during **severe weather conditions**, coordinated by the Whatcom County Health Department and operated and funded by partner community agencies Christ the King Church, Fountain Community Church, Garden Street United Methodist Church and Seventh Day Adventist Church.

Coordinated shelter capacity

Several agencies provide emergency, short-term, temporary shelter year-round for those experiencing homelessness. Emergency shelters can be facility-based or motel stays. While these shelters operate year-round, they are intended to be short-term shelters before someone moves into permanent housing. Lighthouse Mission Ministries (LMM) is the largest provider of this service in Whatcom County.

LMM provides regular year-round shelter for both men and women. The LMM Drop-In Center is open during the day and can accommodate up to 150 men and women each night, and it also offers services from partnering organizations. LLM serves breakfast, lunch and dinner to guests. For more information, visit www.thelighthousemission.org/what-we-do/drop-in-center/.

The Civic Stadium Women's Winter Shelter is provided by the City of Bellingham as an emergency shelter that will provide additional capacity daily for up to 40 women from late November 2019 through February 2020.



Check-in will take place at the LMM Drop-in Center located at 1013 W. Holly and will be managed by the Opportunity Council. Guests will be able to shower daily, and will be provided transportation to and from the LMM for breakfast and dinner. Providing this dedicated shelter for women will open up shelter spaces for guests at the Lighthouse Mission. For more information, or to volunteer, contact cassidy_schroeder@whatcomhsc.org.

If approved, a Youth Winter Shelter will be operated by Northwest Youth Services as an emergency shelter that will provide additional capacity daily from early December 2019 through February 2020. Check-in will take place at the First Congregational Church of Bellingham where Northwest Youth Services already operates a day center for homeless youth ages 13 to 24. Guests will be able to shower daily and will be provided breakfast and dinner. For more information, to donate or to volunteer, contact Emersonm@nwys.org or (360) 734-9862 ext. 125.

Severe weather emergency shelters will operate when a temperature of 28°F is forecasted as the overnight low. Precipitation and wind chill will also be considered when activating severe weather shelters. Community partners who operate the shelters determine which populations they serve. For more information, contact Whatcom County Health Department, abeck@co.whatcom.wa.us.

Not all locations will operate daily during severe weather conditions. Details about which shelters are currently open and their operating hours will be updated daily on the Whatcom County Health Department's website and an Emergency Winter Shelter Hotline at (360) 788-7983.

The Opportunity Council is coordinating motel stays for families with children with funding provided by the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County. For more information, visit www.opcco.org/whsc/. In Unity Village, HomesNOW! is providing up to 20 temporary, safe tiny homes for people experiencing homelessness. These homes will be in operation through April 2020. Future sites are to be determined. For more information, visit homesnow.org/unity-village/

For more information

- Starting Nov. 1, an Emergency Winter Shelter Hotline will be updated daily at (360) 788-7983.
- For a map of shelter resources, visit www.cob.org/shelters
- For City of Bellingham resources, visit www.cob.org/homeless
- For Whatcom County resources, visit www.whatcomcounty.us/homelessshelter

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