

A Countywide Proposal for Winter Sheltering Lincoln County, Oregon

PROPOSAL: The purpose of this proposal is to request funding support from the cities/ municipalities to, along with the County, contribute towards the development and operation of a daily winter shelter program. If adequate funding is generated, the proposed winter shelter program would be operated by the County, through its Health and Human Services Department, and be available October 1 through March 31, in two locations in the county.

While the county, cities and tribe are working on a strategy for long-term solutions to homelessness, there is recognition that a plan is needed to address the more immediate needs that arise during severe weather conditions, specifically during the winter months.

This proposal identifies the items and funding needed to address this issue including logistical challenges, with overnight staffing, meal preparations, scheduling of facilities.

BACKGROUND: Information available through the National Weather Service suggests that a hypothermia risk exists an average of 90 days a year in Lincoln County. While the current number of unhoused individuals is unknown (the 2023 PIT Count is still being processed), it is known that there was a minimum of 414 unhoused individuals in 2020. In 2019 35% of the unhoused were experiencing chronic homelessness (vs 31% in Oregon) and 67% of our unhoused veterans were experiencing chronic homelessness (vs 43% statewide). And sadly, in school year 21-22, 12.1% (754) of youth aged birth through 12th grade experienced homelessness, with 152 being completely unsheltered. Emergency warming shelters have operated during extreme conditions in both Newport and Lincoln City by non-profit organizations. Both have identified challenges including, but not limited to, the unpredictable nature of the weather resulting in scheduling/volunteer commitment challenges, drug use/sales in the shelter, security issues stemming from conflicts among participants, problems reported by facility sponsors, and lack of overall funding support.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The winter shelter will operate from October 1st through March 31st. Proposed hours of operation are from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. During the hours of operation, the shelter will be managed and supervised by paid county employees. Two employees will be always present. Through partnerships with churches and non-profit organizations, volunteers will be recruited to provide additional support and oversee specific services that will be made available to participants (e.g., showers, food/snack preparation and distribution, recreational activities). Support from community organizations will also be solicited to secure needed supplies (e.g., shampoo, laundry detergent, snacks, towels, paper products, food from the food banks, etc....). Partnerships with other government agencies will be developed such as with the County Jail (for food preparation support); County Probation and Parole (shelter cleaning and laundry by community service workers), Lincoln County Transit, local law enforcement (for referrals of unhoused individuals to the shelters, immediate response to disruptive/threat of violence situations, and ongoing safety sweeps of the perimeter), and the Health and Human Services Mental Health Crisis Response Team (for MH crisis situations). Translation and interpretation support will be provided as needed.

Of note, the shelter will provide low barrier/no barrier access to the program. Individuals will not be excluded because of substance use but will be prohibited from using or selling substances on site at the

shelter. Additionally, the shelter will not discriminate on the basis of race, gender identity, sexual orientation and/or religion.

FACILITY: The ability to find a facility that can be used a minimum of 6 months out of the year will be difficult in Lincoln County where facility space is limited. Ideally, if funding is sufficient, two facilities will be identified, one in Newport and one in Lincoln City. A review by county staff, determined that countywide, during the winter sheltering of 2022/23, there were a minimum of 50 to 60 people per evening that were supported in the warming shelters each evening. Therefore, each facility should have, at a minimum, capacity to support up to 50 people on any given night (75 if just one shelter is available), and have the ability to house families, and singles including women and men. The facilities will also need to meet ADA standards, and have adequate bathrooms, showers, community space, kitchen facilities, storage, and parking space. Ideally the facilities will be available, not only for the winter shelter, but also to provide office space for staff dedicated to this program and possible use as a year-round day shelter.

An example of how to configure a facility given previous pandemic public health spacing suggests it would require an estimated 350 square feet for 9 people, or approximately 2500 square feet for 50 people in any composition of singles, or families. With the need for restrooms and showers along with kitchen and office space, the need for 5,000 to 7,000 square feet for each facility is reasonable.

PERSONNEL: It is proposed to have a permanent, full time “Housing and Human Services Coordinator,” that manages all shelter activities. This position is fully funded through the county’s General Fund. While full time throughout the year, primary responsibilities will focus on operating winter shelter facilities between the months of October and through the end of March. April through September will be focused on volunteer recruitment, developing community partnership, supply donations, grant writing, and developing operational policies and procedures.

Additionally, the Housing and Human Services Manager will coordinate the facility personnel. This will include the need for eight (8) additional part time staff per facility (at 2 per shift, 2 shifts per evening, 7 days/week, with each person working 3 to 4 shifts per week). They will be comprised of “Shelter Hosts,” who oversee the shelter operations and act as hosts on day or night shifts, greet guests at the door and provide facility information, and security. Others, along with volunteers, will act as “Meal Coordinators,” arranging for meals for shelter guests and/or “Logistic Coordinators” assigned the task of providing services in support of the shelter operations from shopping for shelter necessities, arranging transportation, etc....

PROJECTED PROGRAM COST: The cost of standing up one facility serving 50 individuals per night is estimated at \$344,000. The cost of standing up two facilities is estimated at \$580,000 or \$291,000 per facility. Spreading the coordinator position expense across two facilities lowers the cost per facility.

Overview of Budgeted Expenses:

- The program coordinator is proposed to be budgeted at \$107,034 (salary plus benefits), based on a preliminary county pay equity education/skills/responsibilities assessment. A candidate is currently in the background check process for hiring.
- The PTNB staff are budgeted at \$21/hour, plus applicable payroll taxes (\$146,628 per shelter)
- Food expense is budgeted at \$25,000 per facility.
- Miscellaneous expenses are budgeted at \$15,000 (e.g., translation expenses, office supplies, supply needs not met by donations, etc., per facility).
- An additional estimate of \$50,000 per facility per year is budgeted to cover rent/utilizes.