

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****December 2, 2025**

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**SUBJECT: EMERGENCY OVERNIGHT COLD WEATHER OVERFLOW
SHELTERING**

During the cold weather season, October 15 through March 31, City of Fort Worth manages an emergency overnight overflow sheltering program for individual men and women experiencing homelessness on dangerously cold nights that the weather meets specific weather triggers and shelters are full. This process does not include families. There is a separate process in place for families seeking shelter on cold weather nights through The Salvation Army.

Emergency overnight overflow shelters activated 20 nights in the 2024-2025 season. On activated nights, the overflow shelter averaged 82 guests per night. The peak night of shelter usage last cold weather season was Thursday, January 9 overnight. On that night, across all shelters in Fort Worth there were 1,236 people in overnight shelter, including 140 at the emergency overnight overflow shelters.

The emergency overnight overflow shelter program is a collaboration between several departments: City Manager's Office - Homeless Strategies, Park & Recreation, Emergency Management & Communications, Police, and Fire – HOPE Unit. The City has contracts with WhenWeLove (M&C 25-0657 authorizes a contract up to an amount of \$200,000 annually) for shelter operations and Trinity Metro for transportation services between regular emergency shelters and emergency overnight overflow shelters.

Preparation for cold weather season

Over the past several months, in preparation for the upcoming cold weather season, Homeless Strategies has convened meetings with several City departments, including Park & Recreation, Emergency Management & Communications, and the HOPE Units of Police and Fire, regular emergency shelter operators, homeless services outreach teams, hospitals, WhenWeLove, Trinity Metro, and 211. Together, these groups work together to implement a plan that ensures shelter demand will not exceed capacity during a cold weather activation.

The partners coordinate not only on the process for an emergency overnight overflow shelter night operation, but also to begin proactive communications to the populations of individuals experiencing homelessness on how to access shelter on cold nights. In advance of the cold weather season, teams coordinate to deliver information cards to individuals experiencing homelessness, put up signage in key service locations, and share information directly during outreach connections.

Process for emergency overnight overflow shelter activation

The emergency overnight overflow shelter is activated when

1. weather triggers are 40 degrees or below in wet conditions, below 35 degrees in dry conditions, or a wind chill of below 32 degrees for three or more consecutive hours, and
2. regular emergency shelters are at capacity.

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Individuals seeking shelter report to existing emergency shelters first: Union Gospel Mission (1321 E. Lancaster Ave.), Presbyterian Night Shelter (2400 Cypress St.), or, for families only, The Salvation Army Mabee Center (1855 E. Lancaster Ave.).

Once those shelters reach capacity, individuals seeking shelter are then directed to True Worth Place, 1513 E Presidio, to be transported to the overflow shelter location(s), which are pre-determined community center locations. The locations are not publicized because these are not walk-in sites.

Street outreach teams, shelter workers, and Police and Fire HOPE Units work collaboratively to encourage individuals to go to the shelters on cold nights. Outreach teams and HOPE Units are provided with bus passes to give to individuals who need transport to the regular emergency shelters. Individuals can call 311 to check the status of the overflow shelter activation.

WhenWeLove staffs the community centers during activation, making sure guests have a warm place to sleep and are provided breakfast in the morning before Trinity Metro provides transportation back to True Worth Place so individuals have a warm place during the day. Code Compliance provides kennels and pet supplies for overflow sheltering.

WhenWeLove accepts appropriate drop-offs from Police, Fire, street outreach and hospitals during the night.

If residents see an individual experiencing homelessness during extremely cold weather, they are encouraged to call 911 so that a welfare check can be completed.

For more information, please contact Homeless Strategies Manager Tara Perez at Tara.Perez@fortworthtexas.gov.

Jesus "Jay" Chapa
City Manager