

Community Sharing Warming Shelter Operating Procedures

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Community Sharing Program
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Introduction

The Community Sharing Warming Shelter (CSWS) is an emergency winter shelter program administered by Community Sharing Program. This year we will be operating at our main campus (1440 Birch Avenue, Cottage Grove, Or. 97424). CSWS originated in 2020 to address the challenges of operating a warming shelter during the pandemic. CSWS was formed by a coalition of Community Sharing employees, Beds for Freezing Nights board members, City of Cottage Grove employees, and local volunteers with a simple mission: to ensure that people experiencing homelessness in Cottage Grove, and surrounding areas, have a safe place to sleep indoors when it is dangerously cold outside. Community Sharing Program operated the CSWS for two seasons in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 utilizing Pallet Shelters, partnered with BFN in 2022/2023 to operate in a congregate setting at one of two local churches and operated in our office in 2024/2025.

The CSWS is a confidential space. We do not share information about the people who access our services, or acknowledge that we know or have provided resources to a person, without a written release of information from that person. Exceptions may be made for police and emergency services by the Executive Director or their designee.

The warming center program normally operates between November 1 and March 31, and activates when temperatures fall to or below 29 degrees Fahrenheit. While at the shelter, individuals also have access to hot food and material goods such as blankets, hats, socks, first aid supplies, etc. based on available donations. As a low barrier shelter program, CSWS welcomes everyone who wants to come in from the cold so long as they adhere to the program's agreements and policies. This manual is intended to provide a basic understanding of how the Community Sharing Warming Center works, including its structure, key positions, protocols, operating schedule, policies and procedures. It also serves as a guide for agency and program staff and volunteers to support efficient and informed activations.

Warming Shelter Coordinators

Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator

Maintains a roster of all volunteers for use in shelter operations and member e-mails and notifications. Arranges training on CSWS procedures and guest management. Develops and distributes to volunteers a volunteer manual containing information pertinent to CSWS. Works closely with the **Weather Tracker** in initiating an activation and with the **Media Coordinator** who assures that notice of activations is provided to the press and public at large.

Weather Tracker:

Monitors numerous weather tracking websites and services to predict when a weather event may precipitate the need to open the center. Confers with the **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator**. Continues to monitor predicted nighttime temperatures throughout the notification period and through an activation.

Media Coordinator

Disseminates information on behalf of CSWS to media sources, including newspapers, radio, and organizational newsletters. In conjunction with Logistics and Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinators, provides notification of activation events to local media and to the public.

Activation Procedures

We follow the three-phase activation protocol of the Egan Warming Center in Eugene, which sends out its first alert whenever the temperature is predicted to drop to 29° F. The **Volunteer and scheduling Coordinator** is on the Egan e-mail alert list and receives notification of proposed activations. Activations may be for multiple nights in a row.

Please note that at times, weather systems move too rapidly to permit strict adherence to this protocol. In such cases, it may be impossible to provide 72-hour notice, and all notice periods are compressed.

72- Hour Alert

- Weather is monitored by the **Weather Tracker**. The **Weather Tracker** monitors numerous weather websites including The Weather Channel, Weather Underground, AccuWeather, National Weather Service, WeatherBug, Google and others. If the **Weather Tracker** determines that an extreme weather event is likely to happen, the **Weather Tracker** informs the **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator** that the warming center should go on STANDBY.
- The **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator** then issues a 72-Hour Alert to all volunteers that the warming center is on standby for an activation with a request to sign up for shifts. Volunteers will be asked to confirm their availability.
- The **Community Sharing website manager** also receives a 72- hour alert notification from the **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator** to update the website of a possible activation and continues to update the status as needed.

48- Hour Alert

- **Weather Tracker** provides the group with weather status for proposed activation date.
- The **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator** arranges staffing and assures that each shift has the required number of persons on duty.
- The **Media Coordinator** provides a notice to the media that activation is likely (STANDBY confirmed).

24- Hour Alert

- **Weather Tracker** provides the group with weather status for proposed activation date.
- **By 3:00 PM**, the **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator** confirms with the **Logistics Coordinator** before issuing the 24-Hour alert that CSWS is activating (ACTIVE).
- After confirmation, the **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator** issues an official 24-hour alert to the **Media Coordinator**, volunteers, and the **website manager** that CSWS will be opening at 7:00 p.m. the following day.
- The **Media Coordinator** assures that a flyer with information about warming center activations has been posted at designated areas in Cottage Grove and notifies the City of Cottage Grove, police department, fire and rescue service and selected warming site that CSWS will be opening at 7:00 pm the following day. All CSWS Coordinators will be copied with the 24-hour activation notice.
- The **Media Coordinator** also issues notices/articles to appropriate media outlets about the opening of the center.
- The **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator** sends a Volunteer Staffing Log to the volunteers that signed up, CSP staff and all other coordinators.

Shelter Schedule

There are three shifts each day of each activation event. Volunteers for shifts should plan to arrive about 10-15 minutes before the start of their shifts.

Setup Crew: 6 PM to 7 PM
Shift ONE: 6:45 PM to 11 PM
Shift TWO: 10:45 PM to 3 AM
Shift THREE: 2:45 AM to 8 AM
Breakdown Crew: 7:30 AM to 8:30 AM
Laundry Crew: 7:30 AM to 10 AM (**approx.**)

6:00 - PM - Setup Crew arrives

Get check-in areas, sleeping areas and signage placed for the warming shelter.

Setup Crew will place *only a few cots* unless there is clearly a demand for more. Additional cots can be added as needed if more guests arrive. Volunteers place sheets over cots, place pillowcase on pillow and issue one blanket.

6:45 - PM All Shift One volunteers report

7:00 - PM Shelter Opens for guests

<u>IMPORTANT: If no guest(s) sign in by 10:00 p.m.,</u>
1. The Shift One volunteers will call (or leave a message for) all scheduled volunteers for Shifts 2 and 3 and the Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator that CSWS is <i>deactivating for that evening/morning only</i> .
2. The Shift One volunteers will close the site.
3. Be sure the facilities are locked.

- 10:45 PM** **Shift Two volunteers report.**
Shift One signs out
- 11:00 PM** **Lights Out for guests**
- 2:45 AM** **Shift Three Volunteers Report.**
Shift Two signs out
- 7:00 AM** **Wake Up guests**
Make sure hot beverage service is ready
- 7:30 AM** **Begin check out for guests**
Breakdown Crew arrives to begin cleanup and closing procedures.
- 8:00 AM** **Shift Three volunteers log out by or before 7 am**
All guests required to leave by this time.
- 8:00 AM** **Laundry volunteer's pickup laundry take it to Room A**
- 8:00 AM** **Complete clean up and close shelter**
 - Store all supplies
 - Do not forget signs!
 - Lock up facility (gates)

Post Activation Procedures:

- TBD

Site Prep and Setup Procedures

Basic site setup steps include the following:

- Set up cots so that heads and feet of adjacent mattresses/cots are nearest – no “head-to-head” proximity.
- Be sure each sleeping area has Kleenex and a trash can.
- Set up an “isolation area” if necessary to isolate obviously ill guests from others. If available, use room dividers.
- Set up check-in table, food service area, games table, and open seating in communal area.
- Post signage. Signage will include multiple copies of Guest Agreement and a site use map.

Guest Check in Procedures

(For unaccompanied minors call Station 7's 24-hour Crisis Line at 1-888-689-3111)

- **All guests must check their bag(s) in – no exceptions.** This is a health and safety rule and is **not optional**.
- Shift One check-in volunteer needs to make sure that guests' information sheets are completely and legibly filled out. Offer to help guests if they are reluctant to fill out the sheet or appear to be having difficulty. Guests must use their real names.

If the person says s/he is sick or has been recently ill, or seems to be sick, ask if we may take temperature. Use stick-on thermometers, if available. People who appear to be ill, have elevated temperatures, or have other contagious conditions (e.g., MRSA) are directed to the isolation area. Everyone uses hand sanitizer.

- **Be sure each guest signs the Guest Agreement on the back of the guest information sheet and logs the time s/he came to the center and the time s/he leaves on the Guest Sign-In sheet for that day.**
 - Each guest completes and signs an Intake Form/Guest Agreement Contract and is logged in to the site via paper registration.
 - Make sure every guest understands and signs the Guest Agreement Contract.
 - Any guest who refuses to sign the guest agreement cannot be admitted to the center.
 - Guest intake forms can be used on consecutive nights for the same person, update tag numbers for each night
- **Each guest receives an ID tag that can be pinned to their clothes (to help avoid loss).** The same number is used on additional tags that are fastened to the guest's personal belongings, including bicycle or cart, knapsack, etc. All personal belongings are stored apart from the sleeping areas in storage.
 - **Guests should be reminded that they will *not* be able to access their belongings during their stay and should take out any supplies they will need overnight at time of check-in, including any necessary prescription medications.**
 - The log-in sheet notes how many tags are issued to each guest.
- Each guest will be shown the locations for hospitality, food service, smoking, rest rooms, and appropriate sleeping areas.

Guests who refuse to follow the rules will be asked to leave unless they agree to comply.

Guest Check-Out Procedures

- Guests turn in their ID tags; their belongings are located, tags are removed, and the items returned to guests.
- Guests are encouraged to have a warm beverage and snack (if available) before departing.
- If available, each guest is given one gift card to a local eating establishment.
 - These cards are given only to guests who have stayed overnight at CSWS.
 - Mark sign-in sheet a card was received or declined.
- Soiled sheets should be put in large plastic sacks for **Laundry Crew** to take. Used recycled fiber blankets, disposable pillowcases, and pillows (if not covered by a pillowcase) should be thrown away.
- Inform **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator** if supplies of any bedding materials are running low.
- **Cleaning crew** will be trained how to use the handheld fogger machine that has non-toxic disinfectant to sanitize cots and areas each morning. Surfaces will air dry and don't need wiping.
- Be sure all supplies are returned to storage cart(s) and intake materials to CSWS storage box(es).

Volunteer Procedures

- **Volunteers log-in** – put name on sign in sheet upon arrival at the center, indicating check-in time, what shift they are covering, and (if applicable) their area of duty (e.g., check-in, food service, hospitality, security, etc.)
- **Volunteers log out** – **Do not forget to log out!!** on the log sheet. Each volunteer notes their checkout time at the end of their shift. They may also make comments on any noteworthy event(s) or conditions (e.g., missing, or faulty equipment or supplies; guest incidents; successful interventions/procedures; etc.)
- The **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator** will keep a roster of all volunteers' contact information and an individual file for each volunteer containing the volunteer's original application, any background checks, the signed volunteer agreement, and any other relevant information.
- *Volunteers' personal information, including the results of any background checks, is confidential. Only the **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator**, her/his immediate helping staff, and the volunteer him/herself shall have access to this information.*
- Other information in the Volunteer Application Form such as shift availability, special training, preferred volunteer work, and other general information is not confidential and may be made available to CSWS coordinators to arrange staffing.
- The **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator** will keep a record of volunteer hours served. Information in this log is not confidential and may be shared with CSWS leadership, potential funding sources, media, and other public and private agencies. The number of volunteer hours logged is valuable information for donors, to garner public support and grant applications.
- The **Volunteer and Scheduling Coordinator** will develop and offer volunteer training opportunities—including CPR and first aid certification—for new and returning volunteers at least once prior to the opening of CSWS each year, and additional times as may be needed.
- A Volunteer Manual containing CSWS information and procedures and other information pertinent to serving as a BFN volunteer will be given to each volunteer who completes a BFN training. The manual may be updated and supplemented from time to time.

Community Sharing Warming Shelter FORMS

These are the forms that are regularly used by volunteers.
Copies are available from the Volunteer and
Scheduling Coordinator

- Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Activation Log
- CSWS Guest Agreement
- Grievance form

We have a minimum of two staff members on site always

- **Minors under 18-years-old not are not allowed to stay in the CSWS warming center.** If minor is not accompanied by a responsible adult, the minor will be referred to Station 7 in Eugene as the Looking Glass Rural Program Home will not be available by phone after 5:00 pm. If the minor is interested in going to Station 7, call the 24-hour Crisis Line phone number and follow directions to assist the minor until an authorized person arrives to take the minor to Station 7. This location can connect them with programs and services.
(For unaccompanied minors call Station 7's 24-hour Crisis Line at 1-888-689-3111)
- New policy: Pets will no longer be allowed at the warming shelter (insurance requirements).

Warming Shelter Tip Sheet

Jennifer Ferraez, LCSW

A Few words about the Culture on the Street

Enter a new culture showing respect and retaining dignity.

a) There are different ways of arriving at a solution. What is the function of this behavior?

b) They are the best expert on themselves. Ask: What works? What does not work?

c) Always take the role of a learner. What does this person have to teach me?

I. Observe—with all the senses

- what do you see?
- what do you not see?
- what do you notice about interactions? (individual and group)

Some Outreach and Engagement Tips

- Call people by their name.
- Never refuse a handshake.
- Make eye contact and introduce yourself.
- Try to remember at least one personal strength of each person you meet and validate it when you see them again.
- Ask before entering somebody else's space.
- Validate life experience.
- Listen with your heart--not just your mind.
- Trust building (one on one). Trust bridging (to your teammate).
- Be present. Be mindful of what you bring to the relationship. Others are our best mirrors. Be ready to see who you are.
- We never know the "hand of cards" someone is holding.

Field Safety and De-escalation

- Do not go into isolated areas alone.
- Always stand at arms-length of people you do not know.
- Make eye contact—get on their level—*kneel if you need to*
- Validate person's concern—"*I hear that you are frustrated about your gear being stolen today. I'm so sorry.*"
- Do not argue with anyone delusional, intoxicated, or agitated in any way.
- With a calm voice, use clear, direct communication.
- If someone is not in their right mind, do not try to use logic or reason with them.
- Take care your own self-care ahead of time (healthy food, exercise, rest, support from friends and family). This will help you remain objective!

"I have learned that in the process of teaching and learning, of communication, involves movement, back and forth: the one who is healed and the one who is healing constantly change places. It is part of the process of moving from idealism to reality, from sky to the earth." *Jean Vanier, Becoming Human*