



Beds for Freezing Nights Operating Procedures

"Warm hearts, warm beds on freezing nights"

Our mission: To provide a safe, warm place to sleep for those who wish to come inside during the coldest nights of the year.

Revised 11/2022

Introduction

Cottage Grove's Beds for Freezing Nights (**BFN**) is an Oregon and IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. It was founded by a coalition of community members representing social service nonprofit agencies, community organizations, Cottage Grove government officials, and individuals from various faith communities who came together to ensure that unsheltered people have shelter during extreme cold weather. Day-to-day operations of the warming center are handled by various committees under the direction of the Board of Directors.

Unsheltered persons, especially those living with medical, mental health, or addiction issues are even more vulnerable in times of inclement weather. Our purpose is to ensure as best we can that all those who need and want shelter in extreme cold weather have it. Everyone who is willing to follow our guest agreement is welcome.

We are in **operation from November 15 of each year to March 31** of the following year and open our shelter space on nights when the *average overnight* temperature falls to **29 degrees F. or below for six hours or more and we have enough staffing**. We activate on the recommendation of our Weather Tracker using multiple weather forecasting sources and in consultation with other BFN staff.

The goal of these Operating Procedures is to provide warm beds on freezing nights and to protect the health and safety of all involved – both guests and volunteer staff. To achieve this goal:

- We have trained staff on site during all hours of operation, with clearly defined roles and with a single on-site person, designated as the Site Lead, who will make final decisions about all operational issues, including the removal of non-compliant guests if that becomes necessary. We have additional crisis management personnel on call during all hours of operation.
- Staff have clear guidelines for all aspects of operations, including set up and use of space, check-in procedures for guests, securing of personal belongings, food service, health and safety issues, caring for persons in physical or mental distress, and emergency procedures.
- We have a minimum of two staff members on site always. We have at least one certified staff member (site lead) on site always. Certified staff are volunteers who have completed at least one BFN volunteer training and have passed a criminal history background check. Site Leads must be certified.
- Our guest agreement contract clearly states rules and expectations for use of facilities. There are clear consequences for failure to abide by the agreement, up to and including expulsion from the shelter in extreme cases.
- The First Presbyterian Church allows dogs and cats only.
- Service animals that are fully under the control of their owner(s), are not posing any threat to other people or animals and are not disruptive to the operations of the shelter can accompany their owners into the warming centers. If the service animal does not meet the above behavioral norms, the owner and animal will be asked to leave the warming center until the animal can be brought into compliance. Guests whose service animals are obviously suffering from any health condition, including flea infestation or mange, may be required to sleep in an area separated from other guests for health and sanitation reasons.

- Minors not accompanied by a responsible adult 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. Station 7 will connect them with programs and services.

1. Organizational Philosophy and Structure

Beds for Freezing Nights (BFN) is non-sectarian. Through its mission of providing “warm hearts, warm beds on freezing nights,” BFN seeks to build bridges of understanding and mutual respect between those who have regular shelter and those who do not. It seeks *not* to be a top-down dispensary of charity from the supposed “haves” to the supposed “have-nots,” but a means to recognize and celebrate our common humanity.

BFN recognizes that guests may be from many and varied religious, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds. Accordingly, attempts to change individual belief patterns or perspectives – although well-meaning – may be offensive to guests. Volunteers sign an agreement not to use Beds for Freezing Nights as an opportunity to pressure or attempt to manipulate guests. On a person-to-person basis, however, story-sharing and personal interaction between volunteers and guests is not only strongly encouraged – it is essential to BFN’s mission of providing warm hearts, as well as warm beds, to those in need.

All aspects of BFN operations are governed by a Board of Directors and Officers. Day-to-day operations of the warming center are run by a series of committees, answerable to the Board. Chairpersons of these committees are referred to as “coordinators.” The primary operational committees of BFN are as follows:

Logistics Coordinator : Steve Nisewander

Responsible for overall operations of all sites, including obtaining/maintaining supplies, establishing procedures for guest check-in and check-out, making sure that all facilities are in good working order, and that each site will have appropriate staffing. In conjunction with the other coordinators, sets in motion 48- and 24-hour activation process when a cold weather event happens. Serves as the liaison with City of Cottage Grove officials and emergency personnel. The **Logistics Coordinator** and **Scheduling Coordinator** work closely with the **Weather Tracker**, who is responsible for signaling when a cold weather event is likely to cause an activation.

Volunteer Coordinators: Michelle Thurston Maintains a current and accurate roster of all volunteers, certified and regular, for use in staffing sites. Maintains an individual file on each volunteer containing confidential information specific to that person (e.g., social security number, background check results, address and phone number). Keeps a log of all volunteer hours, including training events and site staffing. Conducts background checks for those volunteers who wish to be certified. Arranges training events, including CPR and basic first aid as well as BFN procedures, on at least an annual basis. Develops and distributes to volunteers a volunteer manual containing information pertinent to BFN.

Weather Trackers: Mike Fleck and Don Strahan

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

Scheduling Coordinator: Johanna Zee

Maintains database/list of all BFN coalition members. “Clearinghouse” for coalition member e-mails and notifications. Assures that communications are in place for activation events; serves as initial contact for 72-hour activation notification from Egan Warming Center. Works closely with the Weather Tracker and Logistics Coordinator in initiating an activation and with the **Media Coordinator** to assure that notice of activations is provided to the press and public at large.

BFN Committee Chair: Ruth Linoz

Produces and reviews/approves official BFN operational documents (e.g., Operating Procedures manual, including pertinent forms) pursuant to Board directives. Serves as the liaison with warming center host. Receives and records donations of money; maintains donor database; and assures that annual legal filings are timely made. The Treasurer of the corporation is a member of this committee.

Media Committee: James Markus Disseminates information on behalf of BFN to media sources, including newspapers, radio, and organizational newsletters, with input from the Board of Directors. In conjunction with Logistics and Volunteer Coordinators, provides notification of activation events to local media and to the public. The Secretary of the corporation either chairs, or is a member of, this committee.

Fundraising Committee: Ruth Linoz Develops and directs fundraising events at the direction of the Board of Directors. Works with Administration and Finance Committee to develop draft budgets for presentation to the Board. Researches grant opportunities, presents information to the Board of Directors, and takes lead in drafting grant applications.

2. 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 for six hours or more. The **Scheduling Coordinator** is on the Egan e-mail alert list and receives notification of proposed activations. Continued activations may be for from 1-3 additional nights, depending on weather predictions.

72-Hour Alert

- Weather is monitored by the BFN Weather Tracker. The Weather Tracker, taking into account any warnings from any BFN volunteers, coordinators or board members that extreme weather conditions are forecast, monitors numerous weather websites including KEZI, Accuweather, NOAA Radar, and others. If the Weather Tracker determines that an extreme weather event is likely to happen, the Weather Tracker informs the Scheduling Coordinator that the warming center should activate. The Scheduling Coordinator then confers with the Logistics Coordinator to identify which host site is available for activation.
- After consulting with the Logistics Coordinator to identify which host site will be used for activation, the Scheduling Coordinator issues a 72-Hour Alert to all volunteers, coordinators, and Members, and warming sites. Volunteers will be asked to confirm their availability in the event the center does open. To avoid confusion, information is NOT released to the public or media at this point, since Oregon weather is notoriously changeable. The BFN website manager also receives a 72- hour alert notification from the Scheduling Coordinator to update the BFN website of a possible BFN activation.
- If a responding volunteer is not notified by 6:00 p.m. on the day preceding the activation, s/he is not needed for the initial activation; however, s/he may be called upon later to work additional shifts.

48-Hour Alert

- The **Scheduling Coordinator** arranges staffing of the site(s), including designation of one person each shift who will serve as the Site Lead, and assures that each shift has the required number of

staff persons on duty. The **Scheduling Coordinator** attempts to ensure that each shift has one male and one female on site volunteer for each shift. The **Scheduling Coordinator** provides a courtesy notice to the **Media Coordinator** that activation is likely.

- The **Logistics Coordinator** assures that the site is ready for use and that adequate supplies are on hand.

24-Hour Alert

- The **Scheduling Coordinator** confirms with the **Logistics Coordinator** before issuing the 24-Hour alert that BFN is activating. After confirmation, the **Scheduling Coordinator** issues an official 24-hour alert to the **Media Coordinator**, volunteers, Board members, officers, and the BFN website manager that BFN will be opening at 7:00 p.m. the following day. All BFN Committee Coordinators will be copied with the 24-hour activation notice. The **Scheduling Coordinator** also notifies the City of Cottage Grove, police department, fire and rescue service and selected warming site that BFN will be opening at 7:00 pm the following day.
- The **Media Coordinator** assures that notification of the center's opening is posted at designated areas in Cottage Grove. The **Media Coordinator** also issues notices/articles to appropriate media outlets about the opening of the center, including notifying Community Sharing so that their public messages can be modified to reflect the opening of the center.
- The **Scheduling Coordinator** sends a Volunteer Staffing Log to the **Logistics Coordinator** for the nights of the activation. The **Logistics Coordinator** inserts a Volunteer Staffing Log into the Operations Manual notebook prior to the opening of the center on the nights of activation.

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.

3. Basic Shelter Schedule

There are three shifts each day of each activation event. Volunteers for shifts should plan on arriving about 10-15 minutes before the start of their shifts (those arrival times are included below).

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Shift ONE: | 6:45 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. |
| Shift TWO: | 10:45 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. |
| Shift THREE: | 3:45 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. |

5:30 PM Logistics Coordinator delivers supplies

Supplies are picked up, delivered to, and unloaded at the warming site. The **Logistics Coordinator** obtains the BFN cellphone and ensures that it is turned on upon arrival at the warming site. The cellphone is given to the Shift One volunteers as soon as they arrive at the warming site.

6:45 PM All Shift One volunteers report

A Shift One volunteer immediately checks for messages on cellphone. See Operational Manual for instructions how to access messages. If there is no message nothing else is required.

Shift One volunteers complete setup per activation checklist for each warming site (located inside the blue Operations Manual notebook).

Set up 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 pillow case on pillow, issue one blanket and write guest's name on 3 x 5 card to be placed on floor by cot. Men and women guests will sleep in separate areas.

7:00 PM Shelter Opens for guests
Check-in guests and distribute food bag to each guest

IMPORTANT: If no guest(s) sign in by 10:00 p.m.,

1. the designated Shift One site leader will call (or leave a message for) all scheduled volunteers for Shifts 2 and 3 that BFN and the Logistics coordinator is *deactivating for that evening/morning only*.
2. The Shift One volunteers will close the site by following the deactivation checklist inside the notebook.
3. Be sure the facilities are locked and secured.

**10:45 PM Shift Two volunteers report;
Shift One signs out**

11:15 PM Lights Out for guests

**3:45 AM Shift Three Volunteers Report;
Shift Two signs out**

6:30 AM Wake Up guests
Make sure hot beverage service is ready

7:00 AM Begin check out for guests
Begin cleanup and closing procedures

7:30 AM Complete clean up and close shelter
All guests required to leave by this time.

8:00 AM Shift Three volunteers log out by or before 8 am
Lock up facility
Store all supplies

Post Activation Procedures:

As soon as possible after the warming center has been deactivated once a cold weather event has concluded, the **Logistics Coordinator** sends to the **Scheduling Coordinator** the Volunteer Staffing Log to be retained in the organization records of activations.

The **Logistics Coordinator** will deliver to the **Volunteer Coordinator** all individual Volunteer Log Sheets for each day of the activation so that volunteer hours can be accurately recorded.

The **Scheduling Coordinator** may request feedback from all volunteers, coordinators and Board members following some activation events, and will send this feedback to all coordinators and Board members for later debriefing.

4. Site Prep and Setup Procedures

The **Logistics Coordinator** or designated appointee will supervise the set-up of the site. Site Leads must be certified volunteers who have completed CPR/First Aid training.

The Site Lead for each shift will be the decision-maker in the event of questions or conflicts.

There is a setup checklist for each facility for setup and closing. Any questions should be directed to the **Logistics Coordinator** or contact person for the particular site (see emergency contacts list). **Volunteer staff will all wear identifying nametags. The Site Lead's tag will clearly identify her/him as Site Lead.** This operational manual will be onsite, as well as a one-page list of emergency contact numbers.

Basic site setup steps include the following:

- Move unnecessary furnishings to designated storage areas.
- 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 common area.
- Post signage. Signage will include multiple copies of Guest Agreement and a site use map. The map will show designated sleeping areas (general, women and families, sick area), hospitality areas, restrooms, emergency exits, smoking areas, and any other important site features.
- Final walkthrough of the site by setup crew and first shift volunteers before opening doors for check in.

5. 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 volunteers need 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.
- Ask questions: “Are you sick? Have you been recently ill? Do you have any open sores?” 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 or entry into database. 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 shelter. 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 locked 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 are invited to use cots provided – they may **not** use furniture at the site.

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

6. Guest Check-Out Procedures

- Guests turn in their ID tags; their belongings are located, tags are removed, and the items returned to guests. If it is anticipated that the center will be open additional consecutive nights guest's cot and bedding may be left out with their name on the cot.
- 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 BFN.
- Soiled sheets should be put in large plastic sacks for laundering. Used recycled fiber blankets, disposable pillow cases and pillows (if not covered by a pillowcase) should be thrown away. Notify Logistics Coordinator of need to wash sheets (if any) or if supplies of any bedding materials are running low.
- Cots not being used by a returning guest or on final deactivation, should be sanitized.
- Be sure all supplies are returned to storage cart(s), intake materials to BFN storage box(es), and all furniture is returned to its customary position.
- Lock up or request lock-up from Logistics Coordinator or designated site contact.

7. 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 – Don't 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 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 Coordinator**, her/his immediate helping staff, and the volunteer him/herself shall have access to this information, unless there is a legal need for the Board of Directors to review this information, in which event, directors have the authority to access 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 BFN coordinators to arrange staffing.
- The **Volunteer Coordinator** will keep a record of volunteer hours served. Information in this log is not confidential and may be shared with BFN leadership, potential funding sources, media, and other public and private agencies. The number of volunteer hours logged is important information for many funding sources.
- The **Volunteer Coordinator**, in cooperation with the BFN Board of Directors, 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 BFN each year, and additional times as may be needed.
- A Volunteer Manual containing BFN 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.

BEDS FOR FREEZING NIGHTS FORMS

These are the forms that are regularly used by volunteers.
Copies are available for the Logistics Coordinator

Volunteer Forms

Volunteer Application:

- Volunteer Agreement
- Volunteer Request for Background Check
- Volunteer Log-In Sheet
- Volunteer Staff Member Record

Guest Forms

- Guest Intake
- Guest Agreement
- Guest Check In/Check Out Log
- Pet Agreement (First Presbyterian Church ONLY)

Set-up and Staff Information Forms

- Mobilization Checklist
- Health Policies and Procedures
- Emergency Contact Numbers