



METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

**JOHN COOPER
MAYOR**

**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
METROPOLITAN COURTHOUSE
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**MAYOR COOPER ANNOUNCES METRO COLD WEATHER
OVERFLOW SHELTERING PLAN**

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**For Immediate Release
Date: 11/7/2019**

NASHVILLE – Mayor John Cooper today announced the release of the Metro Cold Weather Overflow Sheltering Plan, the result of an intensive multi-agency effort including Metro Social Services, the Office of Emergency Management, Metro Public Works, and the Davidson County Sheriff’s Office.

“The Cold Weather Task Force has been working expeditiously with stakeholders and our non-profit partners to ensure that we have a plan in place to help provide access to a warm, safe bed for anyone experiencing homelessness in Nashville during cold winter nights,” said Mayor John Cooper. “From guest transportation and meal service to pet sheltering and facility safety, this season’s Metro Cold Weather Overflow Sheltering Plan has been carefully thought out to ensure that Metro helps unhoused and unsheltered individuals and families off the streets when outdoor temperatures become unsafe while, first and foremost, providing the support that our community partners need in fulfilling their missions.”

From November 7, 2019 through March 31, 2020, Metro’s overflow sheltering plan will activate when the National Weather Service’s official local forecast reaches 28 degrees Fahrenheit or below, and the overflow shelter will begin receiving guests when primary community partner shelters reach maximum capacity. Shelter activation status will be directly communicated to community partners, submitted to media outlets through the Office of Emergency Management’s public information officer, and can be accessed by calling the Extreme Weather Information Line, which is updated daily by 9:00 a.m., at 615-862-6391.

Transportation to the Metro overflow shelter will run from a heated staging area from 7:00 p.m. until 1:00 a.m. An optimal staging area site is being determined in cooperation with homeless advocacy partners and will be announced by 12:00 p.m. on Friday, November 8th. Law enforcement partners will be available to transport individuals requiring overflow shelter services beyond normal transportation hours of operation. Community partners will also receive instructions on after-hours overflow shelter drop-off procedures.

Metro’s overflow shelter is located at a vacant DCSO dormitory at 5131 Harding Place, Nashville, TN 37211. Standard hours of operation upon activation are 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. The overflow shelter site will include:



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- Beds, blankets, and pillows
- Dinnertime meal service
- Shower facilities
- Boarding kennels and dog food
- Fenced-in yard for guests' pets
- Facility security provided by local law enforcement agencies

Upon departure, each guest will have the option to receive a complimentary WeGo transit pass for use at an MTA bus stop located a short distance from the overflow shelter entrance.

Metro's overflow shelter site has a maximum capacity of 150 guests and was selected due to its operational features including a purpose-built design for housing individuals and couples, the availability of a commercial kitchen for preparing meals, adequate bathroom and shower facilities, access to laundry facilities for guest bedding, and ability to accommodate pets. Past overflow shelter sites were housed in multi-purpose facilities that were not adequately suited to provide overnight group housing services.

The overflow shelter site was also chosen based on an analysis of cold weather shelter capacity at primary community partner facilities and historical utilization rates of cold weather shelter space by Nashville's homeless population. Between Room In the Inn and Nashville Rescue Mission, the current minimum capacity of available beds is 1,247 based on the most recent cold weather season report by Metro Social Services. When Metro's overflow shelter is activated, the total number of available beds increases to 1,397. The single-night record utilization high across all of Metro's primary cold weather shelters during the 2018-2019 winter season was 1,079.

The previous seasons' highs were 1,131 in 2017-2018 and 1,166 in 2016-2017. Record single-night utilization lows were 760 (2018-2019), 903 (2017-2018), and 1,053 (2016-2017), indicating a downward trend in overall cold weather shelter utilization over the past three cold weather seasons. Metro Social Services recorded all shelter attendance numbers when Metro's overflow cold weather shelter was activated and in use.

"Our number one priority this winter is to make sure that anyone in Nashville experiencing homelessness knows they don't need to choose to try and tough it out in the cold," said Renee Pratt, Executive Director of Metro Social Services. "Room In the Inn and Nashville Rescue Mission have plenty of space as our city's primary shelter providers, and the agencies running the overflow shelter will be keeping a careful eye on the weather and bed counts to make sure there's more than enough space to keep everyone warm and safe."

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Questions regarding the Metro Cold Weather Overflow Sheltering Plan should be directed to Chris Song at chris.song@nashville.gov or 615-862-6461. If Metro is under a state of emergency or the Emergency Operations Center is activated, the city's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) will supersede the Cold Weather Overflow Sheltering Response Plan. Media inquiries during a state of emergency or questions regarding the CEMP should be directed to Joseph Pleasant at joseph.pleasant@nashville.gov or 615-880-2011.