
Overnight Warming Location Program Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is an overnight warming location (OWL)?

A: An overnight warming location is a place where people can go to stay warm and dry when temperatures or a combination of rain, wind and temperature become inclement.

Q: Has the City provided this type of program before? How many people can this program serve?

A: The 2017-2018 winter season will be the third year operating the program. The program can serve up to 120 individuals on any given night at four City-owned sites. Each site can accommodate between 25-30 individuals.

Q: Why did the City create overnight warming locations?

A: With over 4,000 people homeless on any given night, the City is working in partnership with the County and other agencies to provide a safe and secure place for people to stay during severe weather.

Q: Do people utilize the service?

A: For the 2016-2017 cold weather season there were 9 inclement weather activations, equaling 31 days, serving 283 unduplicated participants.

Q: What are the four proposed overnight warming locations?

A: We are proposing the following four sites for the 2017-2018 winter season:

- Tully Community Library
- Alum Rock Library
- Southside Senior Center
- Roosevelt Community Center

Q: Can families utilize the overnight warming locations?

A: Alum Rock Library will be designated for families. The site will serve families with children under the age of 18 or unaccompanied youth. The other three sites will serve adults over the age of 18.

Q: When will the City's overnight warming location be activated?

A: City sites will activate if:

- The National Weather Service forecasts an overnight low of 38 degrees or lower with a probability of rain less than 50%; or
- The National Weather Service forecasts an overnight low of 42 degrees or lower with a probability of rain of 50% or greater; or,
- There are prolonged periods of rain with flooding in low-lying areas.

Please note that we are working with the County to consider modifying the above to focus simply on lengthy or excessive rains and low temperatures.

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Q: How long will overnight warming locations remain open?

A: Overnight warming locations will be activated during the cold weather season: December 2017-April 2018. Sites will be open for the duration of the forecasted period of inclement weather.

Q: What are the overnight warming location hours of operation?

A: Hours of operation are 9 pm to 8 am, but may vary from site to site.

Q: Will the overnight warming locations affect other activities at the sites?

A: Since the overnight warming locations operate overnight during hours when the sites are typically closed to the public, there should be no interruption of regularly planned activities at any location.

Q: Who will operate the overnight warming locations?

A: HomeFirst of Santa Clara County is the non-profit contractor for the 2017-2018 winter season. HomeFirst has over twenty years of experience operating similar programs, such as the County's Cold Weather Shelter Program at the armories in Sunnyvale and Gilroy.

Q: What services will be provided at the overnight warming locations?

A: At each site, all clients will have access to soup, warm drinks, snacks, sleeping mats, blankets and individualized case management. Clients will be provided bus tokens and/or shuttle services to and from the location each day of operation. HomeFirst will also contract with a private security firm to ensure site security for staff and clients.

Q: Are pets allowed?

A: Pets are allowed. HomeFirst will provide kennels that will be kept close to the owner during their stay. A designated area will be identified at each site for owners to take their animals to the bathroom. Owners are expected to clean up after their pets.

Q: How does the community find out about an activation?

A: The Housing Department staff will notify City departments via email, including overnight warming locations 48 hours prior to an activation. Housing Department staff will also notify community partners, homeless service agencies, the Service Provider Network (SPN) and Continuum of Care (CoC) network via email, 48 hours prior to an activation. Outreach teams will conduct targeted outreach to encampments to inform residents of the activation. The City will also utilize the counties AlertSCC system to send text alerts to all registered participants. HomeFirst will update the Overnight Warming Location voicemail (408) 510-7600, to inform residents of activation dates.

Q: Who should the community contact with additional questions about this program?

A: Community members interested in additional information about this program can contact Vanessa Beretta – vanessa.beretta@sanjoseca.gov or 408-975-4424 – at the City of San José Housing Department.