

Shelter Services Committee Minutes

Wednesday, August 6, 2025 9-10:30 AM

1. Introductions

2. Shelter Updates: Utilization, challenges, successes, new programming and other updates

- a. City: City RFP process is in progress. CDBG updates on 8/7.
- b. County: County RFP process in progress, reviewing applications. Working with the Beacon and the City on safety with new designs (Safe Growth initiative)
- c. Porchlight Men's Shelter – toured the new shelter, construction in progress, the number continues to be high, in July, average 295 per night (up from May and June). The number of unduplicated people is 1300. Planning for future shelter operation.
- d. Salvation Army Women's Shelter- 90 women last night, saw a dip (high of 120, but now 87-88 women)
- e. Salvation Army Family Shelter – 23 families, working on rooms, will be filling more once the rooms are ready, A family who stayed very long (5 years) is permanently housed.
- f. YWCA Family Shelter - 8 families, totaling 25 individuals (as of Sunday)
- g. Healing House – 3 families (as of Sunday)
- h. The Beacon- Average 266 guests per day including 10 children, agencies partnership - average 300 hours per month, working on building redesign ideas to make the building safer, working to connect people better to mental health and AODA resources, over 1,000 laundry in a month (all machines working, volunteers) in June and July – increased. 970 showers in July. 480 lunches served, partnered with Blackhawk church and mural art artist – beautiful mural art project on E. Washington window, oak tree life process, through storm, guest design and plan.
- i. DAIS
- i. Briarpatch – summer activities for youth in shelter, lots of trips to pools and other places, programming, higher number in previous years
- j. Safe Haven – 30 year celebration, 40-ish people per day, projects on the property
- k. Off the Square Club
- l. Schools –
MMSD: gearing up for school enrollment. Jani planning on going to TSA and YWXCA shelters. Jani can go to other sites, too, if needed. Already 48 TEP students after 3 days of enrollment in MMSD. There are many free school supply drives – you can send families there first. But if they miss them, schools have the supplies. Start online with registration. 1308 students last school year.
Sun Prairie: Start enrollment with online. 334 students last school year.
- m. JFF

ERI – Dane County contract, 18 year or older, can take referrals for SSI application (mental health). Sarah Elswick-Hustad from ERI works on application. Works with anyone on CCS applying for SSI.

3. Meeting Candence

We are currently meeting every other month for 1.5 hours.

Ideas the committee will consider: More frequent in the winter Nov-Mar monthly, and every other month (Jan, Feb, Mar, May, July, Sep, Nov, Dec)

4. Cold Weather Night Conversation

- a. Currently when weather is below 20 degrees.
 - b. Should this change, if yes is it for all population or specific subpopulations?
 - c. What are the impacts? Cost? Space? Operators?
- 20 degrees is not safe temperature to be outside. But there are resource implications – space, cost, etc. to consider.
 - Concerned about infants (smaller body – more susceptible for cold impact).
 - What do other communities do? Melissa Mennig will check with emergency management planning – any age guidance, etc.
 - New York policy: <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/get-help/know-your-rights/extreme-cold-weather-code-blue/>
 - If we make it 32 degrees, then the whole winter may be cold weather nights.
 - Consider different temperatures based on age and needs?
 - It's harder on extreme weather nights at single shelter to serve everyone who are suspended- people are suspended for a reason. Impact on staff and guests who were negatively impacted by the behavior that results in suspension.
 - Also a question whether a new men's shelter be able to accommodate more people.
 - Concerned about the overflow capacity.
 - Need to plan for the family winter overflow shelter now. Significantly reduced hotel funding available for families after December (COVID funds expire in December). There are more steps for family hotel shelter. Melissa will ask Johneisha to start a planning group together (Equus, TSA, schools, CFC, etc.)
 - Central reservation system for shelters idea
 - In the past, we were able to find a space (church) who could host, but we couldn't find a provider who could operate it. We are not sufficiently funding the shelters, either. Where can additional funding come from? Education and Advocacy committee members (Claire and Jani) are willing to take it to the committee to see the interest in pursuing this.

- One pager to appeal to the State, winter sheltering struggle with numbers?
- The family overflow shelter group will discuss have follow up discussion and report back.

5. Miscellaneous/ walk on items/ Topic Suggestions

Next meeting – Wednesday, October 1st, 2025 9-10:30 AM

If you need meeting materials in another format, please contact Melissa Mennig at mennig.melissa@danecounty.com