

Lincoln County Winter Shelter Program Brief Business Plan

Mission Statement:

The Lincoln County Winter Shelter Program will provide emergency shelter, safety, and access to needed resources/supports to unhoused individuals in a no-low barrier setting from October 1st to March 31st of any given year. As experience and financial and community support grows, the program will expand to year-round nightly shelter as well as offer space for daytime shelter activities (provided by community partners) and navigational support for unhoused individuals.

Executive Summary

There is a critical need to develop consistent, wintertime emergency overnight shelter for people experiencing houselessness in Lincoln County. There are no nightly winter emergency shelters in operation in the County.

In the recent past, temperature-triggered warming shelters have operated during extreme conditions in both Newport and Lincoln City by non-profit organizations. Both organizations (one now closed and the status of the second uncertain) have identified challenges including, but not limited to, the unpredictable nature of the weather resulting in scheduling/volunteer commitment challenges, drug use/sales in the shelter, security issues stemming from conflicts among participants, problems reported by facility sponsors, and lack of overall funding. Further, given the often-severe winter weather on the central coast, temperature alone is not a good indicator of when emergency shelter is needed.

The proposed winter shelter program will be operated by Lincoln County, through its Health and Human Services (HHS) Department and be available October 1 through March 31. Shelters will be located in both Newport and Lincoln City. Hours of operation will be nightly from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. During the hours of operation, the shelter will be managed and supervised by paid employees. Two employees will always be present. A program coordinator will oversee the operation of the program. Through partnerships with churches, non-profit organizations and interested citizens, volunteers will be recruited to provide additional support and oversee specific services that will be made available to participants (e.g., showers, food/snack preparation and distribution, recreational activities). Support from community organizations will also be solicited to secure needed supplies (e.g., shampoo, laundry detergent, snacks, towels, paper products, food from the food banks, etc.). Additionally, partnerships with municipalities and organizations that serve the community in a leadership capacity will be solicited for funding support and to serve as a champion for this much needed service.

A key program component will include service navigation to link shelter guests to needed health care and other services. Translation and interpretation support will be provided as needed.

As the program grows and secures reliable funding support, the shelter program will expand to year-round nightly shelter support as well as provide space community partners to provide daytime shelter support.

Provider/Partnership Description

The Winter Shelter Program will be operated by the County HHS department, which includes the service divisions of behavioral health (treatment, skill building, case management, crisis response, and peer support), primary care/community health centers (primary care in 7 locations, including medication assisted treatment), public health (harm reduction, maternal/child family support, communicable disease prevention and health education) and developmental disabilities. Additionally, through the Behavioral Health Resource Network (BHRN)/Measure 110, the County has strong collaborative relationships and referral pathways with agencies that include: Northwest Coastal Housing (Project Turnkey transitional housing in Lincoln City), C.H.A.N.C.E. Recovery (peer support), Community Services Consortium (training and employment), Phoenix Wellness Center (substance abuse treatment), Reconnections (substance abuse treatment and project turnkey housing), and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz.

Outside of HHS, the County has a strong partner in the Housing Authority of Lincoln County (HALC). HALC is taking the lead in locating and securing shelter sites and working to engage a broad range of community partners. A facility is currently under a purchase contract in Newport and the search is ongoing in Lincoln City. Through their management of HUD funded Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly the Section 8 program), HALC can offer a pathway to affordable housing.

Other non-profits that have supported the unhoused in the past have indicated an interest in providing day shelter services in the emergency shelter settings (space permitting) and/or have indicated an interest in providing housing navigation services.

The faith-based community has indicated a willingness to assist with volunteers and resources and several have offered their facilities to provide temporary space while permanent locations are identified.

Beyond the service delivery related partners, efforts are underway to secure financial partners as well. The County Board of Commissioners has approached the County's municipalities for funding support, and efforts are underway to approach local businesses as well as national chains to solicit help for funding or supplies to support the operation of the winter shelter program.

And, in addition to all of the above, the county has approached the InterCommunity Health Network Community Care Organization (IHN-CCO) with a request to join the LC HHS and the HALC to champion this effort and provide tangible financial and other supports to help ensure the success of this endeavor. Given that access to health care ties to the work of the IHN-CCO, and it along with housing is key to addressing the

social determinants of health as well as 3 of the 4 regional Community Health Plan priorities, a partnership among these 3 community leaders is a natural fit.

Organization, Management, and Program Design

As noted, the proposed winter shelter program will be operated by Lincoln County, through its Health and Human Services (HHS) Department, and be available October 1 through March 31, in two locations in the county (Newport and Lincoln City). Hours of operation will be nightly from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Each shelter will serve up to 50 individuals on any given night. Through partnerships with churches, non-profit organizations and interested citizens, volunteers will be recruited to provide additional support and oversee specific services that will be made available to participants (e.g., showers, food/snack preparation and distribution, recreational activities). Support from community organizations will also be solicited to secure needed supplies (e.g., shampoo, laundry detergent, snacks, towels, paper products, food from the food banks, etc.). Partnerships with other government agencies will be developed, such as with the County Jail (for food preparation support), County Probation and Parole (shelter cleaning and laundry by community service workers), Lincoln County Transit, local law enforcement (for referrals of unhoused individuals to the shelters, immediate response to disruptive/threat of violence situations, and ongoing safety sweeps of the perimeter), and the Health and Human Services Mental Health Crisis Response Team (for mental health crisis situations).

The program will serve unhoused and unsheltered adults. Depending upon the facilities that are secured, families with children may be served in shelter facilities if dedicated entrances are available and safety can be assured. Otherwise, the program will offer hotel vouchers to families with children.

Regarding personnel, the program will have a permanent, full time Shelter Coordinator that manages all shelter activities. Primary responsibilities will focus on operating the winter shelter facilities between the months of October and through the end of March. April through September the work will be focused on volunteer recruitment, developing community partnerships, generating supply donations, grant writing, and developing operational policies and procedures. As of the writing of this plan, an applicant has been selected and is in background with the Lincoln County Human Resources Department.

Additionally, the Shelter Coordinator will coordinate the facility personnel. This will include the need for eight (8) additional part time staff per facility (at two per shift, two shifts per evening, seven days/week, with each person working three to four shifts per week). They will be comprised of "Shelter Hosts," who oversee the shelter operations and act as hosts to greet guests at the door and provide facility information and security. Others, along with volunteers, will act as "Meal Coordinators," arranging for meals for shelter guests and/or "Logistic Coordinators" assigned the task of providing services in support of the shelter operations from shopping for shelter necessities, arranging transportation, etc. When possible, part time staff will be hired from among the unhoused individuals who would otherwise access the shelter for support. This will

provide members of the unhoused community with a modest income while building a resume leading to more permanent employment.

In addition to addressing the urgent need for emergency shelter, the program will also provide hands on referrals to supportive services. The County HHS Department directly provides primary healthcare (through its Federally Qualified Health Centers), behavioral health treatment and crisis response, harm reduction, medication assisted treatment, and a variety of health education programs. HHS also coordinates one of the County's two Behavioral Health Resource Networks (BHRNs) and is a partner in both, and therefore has strong referral ties to the organizations that make up both BHRNs. Referral pathways to these existing services will be developed and offered to shelter guests. And, as noted above, HHS is a sister department to other County departments that can bring supports and resources to those that access the shelters as well. In addition to service supports, shelter participants will also be referred to transitional shelters and other housing related supports to carve a pathway from unhoused to permanently/sustainably housed. Furthermore, information and linkages to employment opportunities will be made, including (as noted above) hiring shelter guests to serve as part time staff for the operation of the shelter program.

The shelter will provide no barrier/extremely low barrier access to the program. Individuals will not be excluded because of substance use but will be prohibited from using or selling substances on site at the shelter. Recent reports suggest that houseless individuals who are found deceased on the streets often have substances in their systems. Additionally, the shelter will not discriminate based on race, gender identity, sexual orientation and/or religion.

In the day-to-day operation of HHS services, translation and interpretation support is standard practice. This support will also be integrated into the winter shelter program.

Creating a shelter is a key (and missing) link in the Lincoln County housing and service support continuum and will transform county systems by building capacity to offer shelter and connect the unhoused to supportive services. Developing this shelter program will include establishing new connections and referral pathways among non-profit organizations, government entities, the faith-based community, health care, housing and other providers in our community and encourage increased coordination among the many entities that serve Lincoln County's unhoused population.

Statement of Need

There is a critical need to develop consistent, wintertime emergency overnight shelter for people experiencing houselessness in Lincoln County. **There are no nightly winter emergency shelters in operation in the County.**

In the recent past, temperature-triggered warming shelters have operated during extreme conditions in both Newport and Lincoln City by non-profit organizations. One has closed and the status of the second one is uncertain. Both organizations have identified challenges, as noted above, herein. Further, given the often-severe nature of

winter weather on the central coast that includes nighttime temperatures in the 30s and 40s range, pelting rain and gale force winds, freezing temperature alone is an inadequate measure on which to base decisions about opening a warming shelter. According to the Center for Disease Control, hypothermia can occur even at temperatures above 40 degrees Fahrenheit, and victims are often people who remain outdoors for long periods of time, including those who are unhoused.

According to research done by Morant McLeod, the strategic planning consultant engaged for the development of the County’s HB 4123 consolidated plan, the number of unhoused individuals in Lincoln County is estimated to be around or exceeding 2,000 (see graphic below).

The size of the unhoused population across Lincoln County is believed to be around 2,000 individuals

	ESTIMATES	KEY ASSUMPTIONS	LIMITATIONS
School Data Estimate Method	1,748	There is a relationship between the number of unhoused adults and children that are known via PIT and school district counts.	Individuals without children may be under-represented.
Community Size Estimate Method	1,420	There is a relationship between the size of the unhoused community in Yachats and the size of the unhoused community in the rest of Lincoln County.	Larger cities may be under-represented.
Under & Over 18 Allocation Estimate Method	3,101	The children to adult allocation is consistent between unhoused communities and the rest of the county.	Individuals without children may be under- or over-represented. Children under the age of 5 may be under-represented.
Mean	2,090		
Standard Deviation	+/- 891		

Morant McLeod has done extensive in-person interviews with 37 individuals experiencing homelessness in Lincoln County during the last two months. Their data is also informed by in person visits to the area service providers. According to a presentation to the Lincoln County Homeless Advisory Board on July 12, 2023, the firm demonstrated that “Many within the unhoused community are currently working, recently without permanent housing, or actively searching for both housing and gainful employment. It’s common for them to reach dead-ends in their pursuit.”

Based on Morant McLeod’s field research, the average age of the unhoused community is 46 years (with a range of 19 to 72 sampled), it’s been an average of two years and eight months since the most recent date of employment, and an average of three years and seven months since the most recent date of permanent housing.

In addition, the research also shows that at least 48% of those interviewed report they have had difficulty receiving local housing services. Alarming, **86.5% suffer from one or more serious health concerns, including 46% with a mental health condition and 58% percent with a history of anxiety, depression, or bipolar disorder.**

On average, research participants have gone 2.7 years since their last medical visit, report having vision concerns for an average of 4.8 years and have had dental concerns for 4.1 years.

Sentiments collected from individuals that were unhoused during the firm's research include:

- “I want a roof over my head, or maybe a boat, RV, or apartment...anything to get off the streets in the winter”
- I want to “get into a house, back on my feet, and find a full-time job...but it’s impossible when you’re camping”
- and “I would like an apartment or even a shelter, I don’t want a homeless camp.”

Health Equity Focus:

It is well known that people experiencing houselessness are at increased risk for developing and leaving untreated any number of serious health conditions. As noted above, 86.5% of the Lincoln County houselessness community suffer from one or more serious health problems, with 68% having three or more conditions (Morant McLeod). The Morant McLeod field research suggests that, on average, unhoused individuals have not had a medical appointment for 2.7 years. Yet, 78% have medical insurance, mostly from the Oregon Health Plan. Additionally, based on the 2022 Point in Time (PIT) counts and current U.S. Census data, Hispanic, Black and Native American populations are overrepresented in people experiencing houselessness in Lincoln County.

A no-low barrier shelter for Lincoln County unhoused individuals will provide a starting point for this vulnerable population to access services. It is common for people experiencing houselessness to be hesitant to engage with institutions and other “official” systems, especially the Hispanic/Latino population. Creating a safe, trusted shelter space can encourage connection with and service to people who are ready to seek support.

Providing emergency shelter addresses both immediate and long-term health outcomes for IHN-CCO/OHP members. In the short term, shelter provides a safe, warm space where people can rest and stabilize, tending to immediate survival needs like food and shelter. With these basic needs met, people are then better positioned to address more complex, long-term needs like health and stable housing and access the service and supports that will enable them to do so.

Also, it should be restated that this program will be operated by the County HHS Department. HHS offers directly, or through partnerships, a wide range of health-related services and supports, which will be available to shelter participants.

Outcomes and Measurable Goals

Providing emergency shelter addresses both immediate and long-term health outcomes for unhoused individuals. In the short term, shelter provides a safe, warm space where people can rest, stabilize, and tend to immediate survival needs like food and shelter.

With these basic needs met, people are then better positioned to address more complex, long term needs like health and stable housing. A more targeted list of outcomes and goals are as follows:

Outcome 1: Unhoused individuals do not die on the streets.

Goal:

- The number of unhoused individuals found dead “on the streets” between 10/1/23 and 3/31/24, is lower than compared to each of the prior two years

Outcome 2: Permanent emergency no barrier/extremely low barrier shelter is available in two accessible locations in Lincoln County.

Goals:

- Two locations are operational by 10/1/23
- There is combined capacity to support up to 100 people per night in the shelter program.

Outcome 3: Shelter participants are linked to housing, health care, and needed support services.

Goal:

- A data collection process is established to gather base line information related to the following:
 - Number of individuals referred to transitional and other housing resources.
 - Number accepted into transitional beds.
 - Number of referrals made to health care, behavioral health, substance abuse and employment resources.
 - Number of ER visits by unhoused individuals

Outcome 4: Community support is mobilized to provide volunteers and supply resources for the Emergency Winter Shelter Program.

Goals:

- 75% of volunteer slots are filled each night.
- Supply drives are launched in at least 10 locations.
- Evening meal support is secured every night for both settings.
- Continental breakfast support is secured every day for both settings.

Outcome 5: Programmatic aspects of the winter shelter are defined, written and implemented.

Goals:

- A program advisory council, comprised of community partners, is established and operational.

- A program manual defining shelter rules, policies, activities and referral procedures is completed.
- A strategy for hiring part time staff, to some extent from among the unhoused population, is developed.
- Volunteer recruitment is initiated. Volunteers are trained and then scheduled on a rotating basis.
- Community support is secured for volunteers and meal preparation.

Potential Risks:

The obvious potential risk is that funding support will be inadequate to sustain the operations of the program years into the future. However, given the broad-based community engagement that has, and is, occurring around the development of this program, that seems unlikely. Financial commitments have been made at the county level, future grant opportunities are on the horizon, and talks with leadership at the IHN-CCO and Samaritan Health Plan have been launched to support the program in future years. In addition, with the high level of concern state-wide funding is also more readily available (compared to previous years) both through Oregon Housing and Community Services as well as through Oregon Health Authority.

Another risk is NIMBYism and the negative media coverage that can generate. But the lead partners in this endeavor, the County HHS department and HALC and others, have experience to bring to this type of reaction and will address any issues that present.

Another risk is safety in the shelter's themselves, and policies and procedures will be developed to ensure the safety and security of shelter guests and staff, including the development of quick response procedures with local law enforcement personnel and development of a volunteer training program.

Financial Needs/Projections for the Winter Shelter Program

The operational cost of standing up two shelter facilities is conservatively estimated to be approximately \$600,000 per year (with each shelter operating for a six-month period).

Overview of Budgeted Expenses:

- The program coordinator is budgeted at \$107,034 (salary plus benefits), based on the County pay equity education/skills/responsibilities assessment.
- The PTNB staff are budgeted at \$21/hour, plus applicable payroll taxes (\$146,628 per shelter)
- Food/supply expense in excess of donated items is budgeted at \$25,000 per facility.
- Miscellaneous expenses are budgeted at \$24,85 (e.g., translation expenses, office supplies, Insurance costs, line-item overruns, supply needs not met by donations, etc., per facility)

- An additional estimate of \$50,000 per facility is budgeted to cover rent/utilities for a six-month period for each Facility

A budget is attached for reference.

As of the writing of this plan/funding request, the County has already provided \$40,000 in funding support for startup furnishings and supplies. Furnishings include bunk beds, mattresses, appliances, and equipment.

The Housing Authority of Lincoln County has committed funding to purchase and renovate a facility in Newport Oregon. A facility in Lincoln City is still needed.

Operational funding support has been secured as Follows:

- Lincoln County has allocated \$200,000 per year of ARPA funding, for the first two years of operations. Note: this funding cannot be used for staff funding and is only available for the first two years of the shelter operation.
- Lincoln County has committed to funding the Shelter Coordinator Position through the county general fund (estimated at \$107,000).
- The LC HHS Behavioral Health Division has committed \$125,000 per year.
- Total Operational funding secured to date for each of the first 2 years totals: \$432,000.00 (\$168,000 short of the amount needed to operate two facilities for a six-month period).

Additional funding has been requested through the IHN-CCO DST grant process to help with additional start up and operational costs.

A letter has been sent to the municipalities within the County requesting funding support. None have responded as of the writing of this plan. Additionally, a funding request has been made to Samaritan Health Plan/InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization leadership.

Sustainability Plan

As noted above broad-based community support, both financial and resource oriented, has been and will continue to be solicited for ongoing operation of this shelter program. Though ARPA funding is only available for a two-year period, ongoing financial commitments have been made by the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners and the LC HHS Department. Funding commitment from the SHP/IHN, if forthcoming, will help stabilize baseline funding.

Ongoing financial commitments are being solicited from elected officials and managers from the county's cities. Financial contributions are being requested from larger companies operating within the region and resource donations will be solicited from

organizations and large outlets like Walmart and Fred Meyers. There are known future grant opportunities on the horizon that will be pursued and toward this end, the county has set aside funding to support future grant writing projects. Additionally, direct funding will be solicited from community members through the auspices of a HALC affiliated non-profit corporation.