Accessing Shelter in Denver

The Department of Housing Stability (HOST) partners with many agencies citywide to provide shelter for people experiencing homelessness. There are many shelter facilities throughout the city, so rather than requiring people in crisis to navigate a complex system, we have identified specific centrally-located facilities as the “front door” access to the entire system. These locations offer both walk-up access and have the ability to refer (and sometimes transport) to other shelters as appropriate. They can also help people navigate which shelter facility is the best option for their individual situation.

Our shelters are listed online at denvergov.org/findshelter, including hours of operation. This website also lists walk-up only shelters that do not refer to other facilities, as well as day centers that offer supportive services.

If you or someone you know is in housing crisis and needs shelter urgently, please refer them these facilities:

- **For individual men***: Lawrence Street Community Center, 2222 Lawrence St., 303-294-0157
- **For individual women***: Samaritan House, 2301 Lawrence St., 303-294-0241
- **For families with minor children**: Samaritan House, 2301 Lawrence St., 303-294-0241; The Gathering Place, 1535 N. High St., 303-321-4198; Volunteers of America Mission, 2877 Lawrence St., 303-297-0408
- **For youth ages 15 through 20**: Urban Peak, 2100 Stout St., 303-974-2908
- **For those experiencing domestic violence**: SafeHouse Denver, 24-hour crisis hotline 303-318-9989
- **Service Animals and Pets**: Certified service animals are allowed in shelters. Alternately, Denver Animal Protection offers a Safe Haven Program, which provides two to four weeks of shelter for pets of families experiencing homelessness and during severe weather events.

* HOST-contracted shelters may not discriminate, including based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Severe Weather Shelter Plans

We encourage people to come inside in severe weather. HOST, alongside shelter and outreach partners, monitors weather and shelter usage to activate severe weather protocols and shelter expansions as necessary.

**Capacity**: Denver has partnered with shelter providers to provide flexible capacity during severe weather events. By leveraging the existing staffing and facility resources, shelter for single individuals can flex to accommodate several hundred additional people in our regular shelter facilities during severe weather. For families, access to short-term stays in non-congregate shelter will be provided for the duration of a severe weather event.

**Outreach**: Outreach workers, park rangers, safety personnel, and police actively reach out to unsheltered individuals to let them know when severe weather is expected and to assist them in finding and getting to shelter.
Daytime Warming and Cooling Center Activation:
The City’s Emergency Operations Plan (4.5 Appendix E) outlines how City agencies will work together in the event daytime warming or cooling centers are needed to keep residents (including but not limited to those experiencing homelessness) safe from severe weather.

The Denver Department of Public Health & Environment (DDPHE) is the lead agency in monitoring weather thresholds and determining when temperatures indicate a need for cooling and warming shelters to be activated.

These thresholds are triggered by a heat advisory, wind chill advisory, watch or warning issued by the National Weather Service. The general rule for these thresholds is:

- **Heat:** when the maximum heat index temperature is expected to be 100° or higher for at least 2 days, and nighttime air temperatures will not drop below 75°.
- **Cold:** Temperature below 10°, or 6 inches or more of snow forecasted.

Denver Parks & Recreation will activate warming/cooling centers at open recreation centers during regular business hours. An area in each center will be staffed and available free of charge, with access to drinking water, restrooms, and a place to sit. Denver Public Library locations are also typically available free of charge during daytime hours, including during severe weather.

Emergency Expanded Overnight Shelter Activation: If the above daytime thresholds for severe weather are met AND either of the conditions below exist, additional overnight shelter expansion is considered:

- The City anticipates needing additional shelter capacity above what is available across existing shelters for those experiencing homelessness
- Power outage/gas outage affecting 10,000 or more customers for 12 hours or more

HOST monitors shelter capacities alongside approaching weather patterns so there is ample time to notify partners should shelter expansions become necessary. Expansions typically occur at existing overnight shelter facilities, and people should continue to access shelter at regular front door locations. Shelter operators may independently choose to increase their intake hours during severe weather events at their discretion.

**Please Note:** These severe weather plans may evolve at a moment’s notice in order to be responsive to resident needs. For the most up to date information, please visit [denvergov.org/findshelter](http://denvergov.org/findshelter).

Published October 2022