

**Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Continuum of Care (CoC)
Emergency Shelter (ES) Policies**

It is the priority of the WSFC Continuum of Care to assist every person experiencing homelessness and either living on the streets or in need of emergency shelter to move into permanent housing as quickly as possible.

Within the CoC, emergency shelter is provided to individuals primarily in order to provide relief from weather conditions and as a place to meet basic needs of persons without other housing options. Emergency shelter should not be considered as a permanent living solution.

I. Prioritization of individuals needing Emergency Shelter Services

- a. With the provisions stated herein taken into consideration, emergency shelter shall be provided in accordance with the provider agency's guidelines."
- b. Individual agencies providing emergency shelter may limit service in their facility to designated subpopulations of homeless households. Providers of emergency shelter operating within Forsyth County shall work with other CoC member agencies to ensure that there are adequate shelter beds for all subpopulations needing shelter within our community.
- c. Any shelter may reserve beds for existing and incoming clients consistent with the shelter's written policies.
- d. Agencies providing emergency shelter shall assess individual's safety, and take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of all guests. If an individual seeking shelter is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or other situation in which they are at increased risk of harm from others, the shelter shall work with the client to develop a safety plan which may include referral to law enforcement, a domestic violence shelter, shelter outside of the community, or other service to assist the client.
- e. ES facilities will coordinate intake procedures to optimize bed availability and bed utilization. If an ES facility is full, it will refer persons to other shelters, if available and appropriate.
- f. As needed, the CoC will support the operation of an overflow shelter during the time of the year in which demand is the greatest and weather conditions are most dangerous to those sleeping outside.
- g. The CoC's goal in ES is that every person needing shelter may avoid sleeping in places not meant for human habitation. However, persons not complying with shelter rules and policies, or with a history of noncompliance, may be refused service by any ES facility.

II. *Policy on Moving Homeless Persons to Permanent Housing as Quickly as Possible*

- a. ES programs shall move homeless persons to permanent housing as quickly as possible. ES programs in the CoC shall have a goal of returning people who become homeless to permanent housing within 30 days.
- b. Diversion: For households with a safe option for housing for the night besides ES, the ES program will assist the households to return to those options rather than entering ES.
- c. Coordinated Intake and Assessment: The CoC shall support the operation of a coordinated intake and assessment program which is available to all individuals utilizing emergency shelter or sleeping on the streets or other places not meant for human habitation. ES programs receiving funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) shall participate in coordinated intake and assessment. Coordinated intake and assessment will coordinate access and prioritization to specified housing resources, including HUD-funded rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing.
- d. Tracking system outcomes: The CoC shall track the number of people entering and leaving ES, transitional housing, and permanent housing. The CoC will seek to identify system gaps and invest resources such that ES programs may quickly move homeless households into permanent housing.