



NEWS ADVISORY

July 20, 2021

For immediate release

City Seeks Locations for Emergency Winter Shelter

The City of Missoula would like to hear from property owners who may have suitable locations for the City's expanded Emergency Winter Shelter program and are willing to lease from Nov. 1 through mid-April.

The City, with financial support from Missoula County, has operated an Emergency Winter Shelter program the past three winters. It provides indoor shelter for people living unsheltered in the Missoula community. Under normal circumstances, supplementing the Poverello Center's 175-person capacity with additional shelter at the Salvation Army has been adequate. Last winter, infectious disease safe practices made necessary by the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the Poverello Center's capacity to 88 people. The Emergency Winter Shelter program operated at the Johnson Street Community Center at Johnson Street and North Avenue with a capacity of 150 people and operated many nights close to that capacity. It was managed through a contract with the Poverello Center.

City management and staff anticipated that the need for extra winter shelter beyond the Poverello and the Salvation Army would be for one winter season only. However, the continuing presence of COVID-19 in communities nationwide means the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has kept the capacities at homeless shelters limited. The CDC has no anticipated end date for the restricted capacities. National estimates forecast an increase in the unhoused population this coming year because of economic fallout from the pandemic and the increase in housing prices. Thus, the City of Missoula is looking ahead and planning for another winter that requires an additional location for people without shelter.

The City of Missoula owns the building at Johnson Street and North Avenue. The building could be used again for this purpose but will need some repairs if so. Those repairs should begin in August.

Property owners interested in leasing property for this purpose need to own a building that could sleep 150 people; that has basic accommodations for sanitation and public safety; meets plumbing, fire suppression and exit public safety standards; and is available for lease from Nov. 1 through mid-April.

Interested property owners should contact Eran Pehan, Director of Community Planning, Development and Innovation at the City of Missoula at pehane@ci.missoula.mt.us before Aug. 1.

The Missoula City Council and the Missoula County commissioners support the Emergency Winter Shelter program in the interest of preventing deaths of unsheltered people during the winter months.

Interview contacts:

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