



BUILDING UP

Winter Warming Supports 2024-25

Available Resources

Winter warming strategy

- While it is not within its legislated provincial and federal mandate, the County of Simcoe facilitates a winter warming strategy on behalf of member municipalities and the two separated cities that opt to offer differing levels of resources.
- The County issued a Request for Proposal in June 2024 for a multi-year funding opportunity for warming and cooling services. Since then, the County has been in negotiations with a number of different service providers to secure more warming options for those staying outside.
- Currently, the winter warming services strategy offers regional options during inclement weather from October 15, 2024, to April 30, 2025.

Alternate Space Activation

- Alternative Space Activation is a newer option introduced last winter that **created approximately 110 spaces in our emergency shelter locations** when the weather drops below -10 degrees Celsius.
- This is not a bedded program but an overnight drop-in option for those staying outside. It provides space throughout each location that could include cafeterias, boardrooms, offices, and lounges.
- Clients who choose to use this activated space would not need to go through the regular intake process, but the service provided would capture capacity counts to adhere to the fire code and give the County a better understanding of the overall service need.
- The service providers would offer something warm to drink and time to rest. These spaces could be operated during the day or night. **Last year, the program was activated approximately 20 times.**
- When activated, Alternate Space Activation is available 24/7.

Motel Voucher Program

- Recently, the County centralized the Motel Voucher Program through Community Connections' 211 services.
- **This program allows spaces to dynamically expand as needed.** It gives access to adults and families with children, along with those who cannot access the shelter system for varying reasons, an opportunity for alternative accessible space.
- This service also assists with transportation to participating motel locations throughout the County, as currently, homelessness outreach services do not provide client transportation. *Clients utilizing this option are required to complete full intake.*

More information on the County's supports for individuals experiencing homelessness can be found at

simcoe.ca/HomelessnessSystem



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Winter Warming Centres

- All six of the County Social & Community Services offices are available to anyone who needs to come inside and stay warm between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday. Locations can be found at **simcoe.ca/HomelessnessSystem**
 - All offices have on-site Ontario Works staff, along with various community agencies such as ODSP, Employment Ontario, CMHA, etc.
 - *Please note, times and availability of community partners will vary by date and location.*
 - Additional services (*varies by location*) include access to winter clothing (i.e. hats, gloves, Jackets, etc), light snacks, and access to computers and phones.
 - The Orillia SCS office is home to a primary health care clinic, available every Tuesday and Wednesday, for individuals without a primary health care provider.
 - The Clinic's Nurse Practitioners are able to: diagnose illnesses and injuries, perform routine checkups, order procedures/diagnostic tests, assist in completing social assistance-related medical-related forms, refer to other health professionals, and prescribe medications.
- As the System Service Manager, the County of Simcoe funds five libraries, three food banks, two housing resource centres and a larger breakfast program in the City of Barrie, that all provide different daytime indoor services for those experiencing homeless.
- All of these **year-round programs** remain available for those who choose to utilize them.
- Warming centre locations can be found at **simcoe.ca/HomelessnessSystem**
- **Overnight warming spaces:** The County has overnight night warming programs in Orillia, Bradford and Barrie – this includes two new programs in the City of Barrie.
 - These four programs offer a total of **58 overnight warming spaces**.
 - Ten of the spaces in Barrie are activated during inclement weather, while the other ten are offered specifically for those with additional needs and accommodations throughout the winter.
- **Future spaces in Barrie:** The County has also secured two new locations in the City of Barrie that will offer **an additional 30 spaces for daytime** and overnight services.
 - These two new programs are anticipated to be ready in the next few weeks and will be available until April 30, 2025.
- **Future spaces in additional communities:** The County is also planning for new, additional warming programs in several additional communities across the region.

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Supporting vulnerable seniors

- Since November 2024, the County of Simcoe has begun **permanently transitioning 48 seniors (55+)** living in emergency shelters to assisted living programs and modular rapid rehousing programs.
- The three new programs located in Barrie open up an additional 48 emergency shelter beds that would have previously been used by these individuals.

Outreach Services

- The County funds nine outreach services that will continue to offer support to those who may choose to remain outside.
- Enhanced street outreach services provide **outreach to those experiencing homelessness 365 days a year, seven days a week**, with increased emphasis during extreme winter temperatures.
- Outreach teams facilitate access to shelter or respite beds and offer individualized supports to help with accessing a range of services such as income supports, mental health and addiction services, health care services and assisting individuals to develop plans to transition from to more permanent housing options.

Supportive Rapid Re-Housing Program (SRRP)

- The County's Supportive Rapid Re-Housing Program (SRRP) is a temporary program designed to assist individuals who are facing homelessness **transition into permanent housing** within a short period of time (typically 180 days).
- Clients are considered low-risk individuals who have been impacted by situational homelessness.
- People who live in the SRRP units are supported through all aspects of the move-in process, including:
 - unit viewings
 - reviewing leases
 - furnishing apartments
 - establishing connections
 - Social service system navigation
 - Intensive case management supports
- On-going follow-up supports are provided to ensure clients are adapting well and support they require is available.
- During the SRRP housing period, residents are provided full wrap-around services including mental health, addiction, employment supports and other needs.

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