

Overnight Warming Locations Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is an overnight warming location?

A: An overnight warming location (OWL) is a place where individuals can go to stay warm and dry, and get some sleep, in the evening hours during the cold weather season.

Q: Why is the City creating this program?

A: With over 6,000 people homeless on any given night in San José and a cold and wet winter anticipated, the City is working in partnership with the County and other agencies to provide as much shelter as possible to keep people safe from severe weather.

Q: Has the City provided this type of program before?

A: Yes, this is the seventh year of the program. However, this is the third year operating the program consecutively every evening. In prior years, the City would open the program during periods of inclement weather, which was dictated by temperature and rainfall.

Q: How many individuals will the OWLs serve?

A: The program can serve up to 50 individuals each night at two City-owned sites. Each site's capacity was approved per fire code and Public Health recommendations.

Q: When will the OWLs be open?

A: Each evening during the cold weather season consecutively from November 15, 2022, through April 30, 2023.

Q: What are two OWL sites?

A: The two sites are:

Roosevelt Community Center - 901 E Santa Clara St, San Jose, CA 95116

West Valley Branch Library - 1243 San Tomas Aquino Rd, San Jose, CA 95117

Q: What are the hours of operation at the OWLs?

A: Operating hours and time of exit may vary by location. General hours of operation will be 8:00pm to 8:00am. Individuals shall exit by 7:00am to allow for site clean-up and sanitization. Based on site programming, hours are subject to change.

Q: How does someone get a bed at the OWLs?

A: Participants of the overnight warming locations will be by referral only. Unless referred to the program, those who drop in will not be guaranteed a bed. Individuals may request a bed by calling the HomeFirst OWL referral line at 408-539-2105. Outreach workers will prioritize referrals for those living unsheltered in proximity to each OWL site.

Q: Why doesn't OWL accept walk-ins?

A: A referral system aligns with the County Cold Weather procedures, and it helps reduce loitering in the area. Referral systems are a national best practice among emergency shelters, and better serve the participants by reducing anxiety because the bed is guaranteed.

Q: Who will operate the OWLs?

A: HomeFirst of Santa Clara County is the non-profit contractor. HomeFirst has over forty years of experience operating similar programs, such as the largest emergency homeless shelter in San José and the Cold Weather Shelter Program that opens shelters at various locations throughout Santa Clara County.

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Q: Can families with children use the OWL sites?

A: No. The sites will only serve adults over the age of 18. If you are a family or youth in need of shelter or services, please call Here4You at 408-385-2400 (7 days a week 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.).

Q: Will the OWLs interfere with other activities at the sites?

A: Since OWL operates during hours when the sites are typically closed to the public, there should be no interruption of regularly planned activities at any location. There will be daily communication between community center staff and Housing Department staff should there be interference with scheduling, and a resolution or adjustment of hours/location may be required.

Q: What services will be provided at the OWLs?

A: At each OWL site, participants will have access to warm drinks and prepackaged meals, mats and blankets (cots available for those who require them), kennels for animals, storage for personal belongings, and bus tokens. Case management services will be available by appointment.

Q: Will there be security at the OWL sites?

A: Private security will be on-site at both locations 7 days a week from 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 a.m. to ensure site security for staff, community center and library patrons, and participants of the OWLs.

Q: Why was this site selected for OWL?

A: The Housing Department partnered with Library and Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department staff to evaluate the City-owned library and community center sites with a consideration of serving multiple neighborhoods and Council districts over the years. The Housing Department must gain approval from various stakeholders while assessing and inspecting locations based on the following minimum criteria:

1. Proximity of known concentrations of homeless populations living outdoors in potentially unsafe and exposed areas;
2. Access to additional nearby supportive services and public transportation;
3. Site accessibility and layout.

Q: Who should the community contact with additional questions about this program?

A: Community members interested in additional information about this program can contact the OWL Hotline at 408 - 975-2695 or OWL@sanjoseca.gov.

For more information, please contact the following

City of San José Homelessness Response Team

Stephanie Jimenez (Program Manager) – stephanie.jimenez@sanjoseca.gov or 408-489-0717

Ryan Sanders (Program Manager) – ryan.sanders@sanjoseca.gov or 408-534-2960

To report concern for a homeless person or homeless encampment

Homeless Concerns Hotline – homelessconcerns@sanjosecaca.gov or 408-975-1440

Emergencies

Please call 911