



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF CODE BLUE POLICY

Working with community partners, Monroe County will add more shelters, more beds and provide transportation assistance to shelters during Code Blue events

MONROE COUNTY, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announced changes in this year's Monroe County Code Blue plan, which provides warming centers for unhoused individuals when temperatures dip below 32 degrees. Those changes include more robust community outreach; boosting the number of participating Code Blue shelter and 24-hour warming center providers from two to four; an increase in the number of available shelter beds; and having bus passes available for individuals who require transportation to a participating shelter or warming center.

“Our team continues to work diligently to ensure that each person has a secure and welcoming place to warm up or to sleep during our coldest days,” **said County Executive Bello**. “These additional shelters, beds and transportation assistance will save lives and I am grateful for the Department of Human Services team and our partner organizations who have been working for many months to make it happen.”

In July, Monroe County began meeting with a group of community stakeholders, homeless advocates and homeless service providers to hear suggestions for improving the Code Blue program. The group focused on tackling three key issues: adding additional capacity and beds, better communicating Code Blue services to those in need, and assisting with transportation to the warming centers.

The working group helped the county add YWCA and Project Haven as warming centers/shelters to supplement existing partnerships with Open Door Mission and House of Mercy. As a result, the county will be able to offer 141 shelter beds, up from 100. The YWCA facility will open for use as a warming center and shelter on December 18.

“We have preparing all year for Code Blue days, and we are ready to assist more people than ever before,” **said Department of Human Services commissioner Thalia Wright**. “I am proud of our DHS staff and our partner organizations who ensure every person in our community has a safe and warm place to stay this winter.”

Additionally, Monroe County is providing outreach workers with palm cards that list the names, numbers, addresses and bus routes to the warming centers that will be distributed by outreach workers.

RGRTA will provide free transportation from the transit center to the warming centers/shelters during Code Blue events. Additionally, outreach teams and the Father Tracy Advocacy Center will distribute bus passes to individuals who are not near the transit center.

“In Rochester, there are often many people doing many things when it comes to the homeless, **said co-chair of the Homeless Services Network Mike Rood.** “The Homeless Services Network is diligently trying to pull people together, to work together towards the goal of alleviating homelessness in our community. Trying to embrace our differences for the greater good and partner, with that goal in mind. I think this group has been an example of how this can work and how to get many voices to the table in conversation and planning.”

Code Blue is enacted when weather conditions pose a threat of serious harm or death to homeless individuals refusing shelter, typically when wind chill temperatures are expected to drop below 32 degrees.

Code Blue was initiated on November 21, and will end when weather conditions permit.

“Open Door is grateful to once again partner with Monroe County to provide expanded and enhanced services to individuals experiencing homelessness this winter,” **said chief executive officer of Open Door Mission Anna Valeria-Iseman.** “Our numbers have been drastically increasing, but we feel supported and prepared for the cold season through our partnership with the team at Monroe County Department of Emergency Housing.”

“Project Haven, a REACH Advocacy, Inc. program, is proud to partner with DHS and other emergency shelter providers to offer this critical community service,” **said co-founder of Project Haven Andy Carey.** “Together, we can provide a community solution to a community problem. Project Haven and its partners, MC Collaborative, St. Peter's Kitchen, Recovery Houses of Rochester, Everyday Alliance, Em-Luke LLC, Papa Joe Rents, Brightstar Community, Pinnacle Planning and Research, On The Ground Research, Health Reach, and Action Front Center, are hopeful that our collaborative approach will lead to our shelter guests receiving the support and services that they need, especially during the coldest Rochester days.”

“House of Mercy stands ready to provide a warm refuge from the freezing cold, offering emergency shelter beds during Code Blue conditions,” **said executive director of House of Mercy Dr. Tammy Butler.** “With essential services and compassionate care, we're here to support those experiencing homelessness. If you or someone you know needs shelter, please call 585-546-2580 for immediate assistance.”

“In partnership with other community agencies YWCA of Rochester & Monroe County is committed to provide a safe haven for those without shelter, providing warmth, nutrition, and supportive environment for our neighbors this winter season,” **said vice president of operations for the YWCA Mary Phyllis Lukenbill.**

Monroe County Warming Center Sites are listed below:

Open Door Mission, 210 W Main Street, RTS Routes: 16, 17,18,19,20

Project Haven – Women, 77 Barberry Terrace, RTS Route 5

House of Mercy, 285 Ormond Street, RTS Route 3

Project Haven - Men, 720 W. Main Street, RTS Routes 16, 18, 23

YWCA (Opening on 12/18/23), 35 Ardmore Street, RTS Route 18

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