



Hypothermia Season 2007-2008 Shelter utilization during the coldest months of the year

TCP
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During the coldest months of the year, the District of Columbia increases the amount of Low Barrier (12-Hour) shelter space to provide additional health and safety for homeless men and women.

There are over 1,300 Low Barrier shelter beds open in the District year-round. During Hypothermia Season, which ran from November through March, 700 additional beds were opened each night and another 160 beds opened when the temperature fell below 32 degrees.

Regional Need for Shelter

Over **70 percent** of emergency shelter beds for single persons in the Washington metropolitan area are located in the District. On an average night, **one in five** of the clients served in D.C. lived outside of the city before becoming homeless.

Exits from Institutional Settings

A number of clients enter the shelter system from institutional settings such as foster care, jail or prison, hospitals and mental health or substance abuse treatment facilities. Between November 2007 and March 2008, **426 clients** reported living in these settings in the week prior to entering a Low Barrier Shelter. This is a **13 percent** increase among clients served during the same period last year.

Utilization

Using data collected by the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) the Community Partnership found that **6,341** unique clients were served in the District's Low Barrier Shelters between November 2007 and March 2008. This period is when shelters are most heavily used and when there is the most transience among shelter users.

Of the clients served, **85 percent** were men and **15 percent** were women.

The following table details utilization at the 21 Low Barrier and Severe Weather facilities open during Hypothermia Season:

Women's shelters	Avg. Occupancy Rate	Nights Open
CCNV	82%	113
Community of Christ	23%	88
Harriet Tubman	95%	152
John Young	88%	152
Madison Overnight Shelter	98%	152
Meridian Hill/Hermano Pedro	86%	139
New Covenant Church	19%	75
Open Door Overnight Shelter	95%	152
Men's shelters	Avg. Occupancy Rate	Nights Open
801 East	95%	152
Adams Place	95%	150
Banneker Recreation Center	83%	137
DC General Building 9	72%	126
DCGH Sobering Center	18%	117
Drop-in Center at Federal City	92%	138
First Seventh Day Adventist Church	68%	76
Franklin School Shelter	100%	152
La Casa	99%	152
New York Avenue	95%	152
Sacred Heart Catholic Church	>100%	123
St. Aloysius McKenna Center	84%	121
St. Luke's	90%	76

Note: Occupancy Rate is based on the number of clients served versus the number of beds each site is contracted to provide when opened. The average is calculated using the occupancy rate achieved on all nights a given site was open.

What is Hypothermia?

Hypothermia occurs when body temperature drops below normal due to exposure to the cold. If left untreated, the symptoms of hypothermia can be fatal.

Providing additional shelter to those who might otherwise sleep on the street is crucial to saving lives. Homeless outreach teams are trained to recognize the symptoms of hypothermia, and help those that might be unaware of its severity find a warm place to stay for the night.

As a result of these additional resources, there were no hypothermia-related deaths in the District this winter.

TCP News Corner

The Community Partnership's homelessness prevention efforts were featured in a documentary produced by the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Keys: Ending Family Homelessness highlighted the District's homelessness prevention efforts which have kept 1,200 families with children a year from entering the shelter system.

The documentary was screened in February in Seattle, WA at the annual National Conference on Ending Family Homelessness.

The free video is available for viewing online at: www.endhomelessness.org.