



Frequently Asked Questions

Churches

Q. How many churches are needed for the Winter Shelter Network (WSN) to operate?

A. There is no limit on the number of churches that can host our guests. In order to operate nightly, a minimum of 7 Overnight Host Churches are required. The more churches in our network, the less frequently each church is scheduled to host.

Q. How many volunteers are needed for each night of hosting?

A. Approximately 20+ volunteers are needed to host WSN guests each week. Those volunteers serve with meal preparation (5-10 people); setup (4 people); evening hosts (2 people); overnight hosts (2-8 people); cleanup (4 people); laundry (2-4 people); and supplies (2 people). More information about volunteer roles can be found at wintershelternetwork.org.

Q. How will the Overnight Host Church volunteers know how many guests to expect each night?

A. Knowing the number of guests is critical for meal preparation as well as set up. Volunteers providing a meal should expect to prepare for 40 guests (plus volunteers at dinner). Guests must reserve space at the WSN by noon each day. The guest database will be available to the volunteer coordinators by 3 pm.

Q. Who does the Overnight Host Church contact in case of an emergency?

A. In the case of an emergency that requires an immediate response, volunteers should contact 911. The WSN employs a part time administrator who manages the daily operations of the program. Overnight emergencies are handled by members of the WSN Council. This Council is made up of volunteers from each of our partner churches. Contact information of the Council member on duty is provided by the administrator.

Q. Who does the Overnight Host Church contact if a guest has a need that the shelter does not provide?

A. All guests in the WSN are referred by a partnering agency. Guests should be referred back to that agency for additional assistance.

Q. Our church wants to participate but doesn't have all of the requirements of Overnight Host Churches. Can we still be a part of the WSN?

A. YES! Members of our Council will meet with you to see how you can partner with us to serve the homeless women and children of Douglas County. Some churches serve as Support and Affiliate Churches when they physically can not host our guests. Some Overnight Host Churches rely on Support and Affiliate Churches to help defray financial costs as well as for volunteer support. Meals, additional volunteers, and supplies are common ways Support and Affiliate churches can help the Overnight Host Churches and the WSN.