

# **Information Report**

## Nanaimo 2023-24 Warming Centres Recommendations

October 2023

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# OVERVIEW

## Purpose of this Report:

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee with recommendations on the siting of warming centres in the upcoming year; and to suggest that correspondence being sent to key partners and stakeholders request that options be explored for mitigating the impacts of warming centres on the surrounding communities.

## Background

Nanaimo's response to extreme weather results in the combined partnership efforts and resources of the City of Nanaimo, community agencies, available facilities including the use of community-used buildings (e.g. faith and recreation facilities) that are not specifically designed for emergency weather use.

The funding is drawn from many sources including federal and provincial funding, as well as local funding. The common thread for all of these sources is that there is simply not enough to respond to the needs of community members whose lives are at risk during extreme weather.

- Nanaimo has seen a continuing increase in the number of unhoused community members. Long-established development principles and practices combined with a significant demand from outside of Nanaimo means that being poor in a community with low rental opportunities leads directly to homelessness.
- The federal and provincial government incentives to increase the supply of rental units is significant for Nanaimo's ability to address the housing for some community members.
- With the City wedged between the Salish Sea and Vancouver Island Ranges, "centralized" responses in the downtown underserves significant numbers of community members in many pockets of the City.
- Qualified staffing has become an emerging challenge for every organization, and community agencies are disproportionately affected by this shortage. These organizations can't compete on pay rates because budgets are razor thin, and they are expected to have surplus HR capacity. This makes weather-based staffing extremely challenging. Augmenting staff with volunteers has limited application. Skilled staff are required, and keeping them employed makes weather contingencies much easier to manage.

# City of Nanaimo Request



2023-APR-27

VIA Email: [don@bonner.ca](mailto:don@bonner.ca)

Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization  
250 Albert Street  
Nanaimo, BC  
V9R 2V6

Attention: Don Bonner, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization (SPO) Board Chair

Dear Don,

**RE: WARMING CENTRE NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPACTS**

At the 2023-APR-17 Regular Council Meeting, Council received a delegation from Mr. John Cooper on the topic of warming centres and the impacts of warming centres on businesses and residents nearby. In response to this delegation, Council made the following motion:

"That correspondence be sent to the SPO requesting they facilitate discussions with the City, service providers, BC Housing and any other relevant parties for the siting of warming centers in the upcoming year; and that the correspondence request that options be explored for mitigating the impacts of warming centre sites on the surrounding community."

Based on the Council motion above, Staff are requesting that Nanaimo's SPO facilitate discussions with key partners and stakeholders, including key City Staff, to start planning and identifying potential warming centre locations for the upcoming 2023-winter season and beyond.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or wish to connect to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Lisa Bhopalsingh  
Director, Community Development  
City of Nanaimo  
250-755-4460 ext. 4332

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# Executive Summary

Nanaimo's response to extreme cold weather events for unhoused community members is a perennial concern for local government, residents, community service agencies.

The City applied for UBCM administered Strengthening Communities funds in April 2022 knowing that there was a need for 2022/23 winter warming services. The funding application was successful and an EOI was sent out Oct 4, 2022 to local service agencies, with only one response, that withdrew. Thus, the City kept the EOI open, and continued to reach out to find a space and operator. Finally by November spaces and operators were found, and the funds could be dispersed and warming services provided.

In late spring 2023, the City of Nanaimo Council invited the recently incorporated Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization Society (Nanaimo SPO) to consider options for weather responses in the coming 2023-24 winter season. This invitation allowed the Nanaimo SPO the necessary lead time to consider and make recommendations about locations and other factors associated with Warming Centres as a critical response to extreme cold weather. Specifically,

*"That correspondence be sent to the Nanaimo SPO requesting they facilitate discussions with the City, service providers, BC Housing and any other relevant parties for the siting of warming centres in the upcoming year; and that the correspondence request that options be explored for mitigating the impacts of warming centres on the surrounding communities"*

In the interest of engaging the community in meaningful discussions about Warming Centre establishment, operation, and impact on surrounding communities that improves services, increases awareness, and better supports those in need, the Nanaimo SPO convened meetings of representative community agencies to consult on possible responses.

This "Collective" included City of Nanaimo community planning staff, Snuneymuxw First Nation, CMHA-Mid Island Branch, Island Crisis Care Society, Risebridge, Salvation Army, Connective, Unitarian Church shelter, Island Health, and other representative agencies engaged in responses to extreme weather and shelter needs.

The Report reflects *Terms of Reference* that were surfaced by the Collective through meetings in June and July. A following meeting provided details that inform this report. The findings were further informed by information provided in further meetings by participants including the City of Nanaimo's Community Safety Officers program.

The central recommendation is that Nanaimo needs to have multiple warming centres that are easy to access by unhoused community members. This will result in better outcomes for these community members, as well as much lower impact on surrounding communities and as a result, less resistance by the community to the locations chosen for warming centres. The Recommendations also reflect the unique geography of Nanaimo: a coastal community situated in a linear shape between central Vancouver Island's mountains and the Salish Sea. This shape makes accessibility and centralization of services more difficult than in communities of similar size that are more circular in fashion.

Additionally, it is increasingly the case that unhoused community members are dispersed throughout the entirety of the City, living wherever they can find shelter. The impact of this geography and dispersion points to the need for 2-3 locations for Warming Centres to meet the needs of unhoused community members. Multiple locations will significantly mitigate the impact on surrounding communities. That said, it is a challenge to locate warming centres, and as such, will require further investigation to determine and secure locations.

# Terms of Reference

The Collective's dialogues were guided by Terms of Reference (ToR) to address each operational component of adequate daytime Warming Centres. These ToR's reflect the recommendations based on a review of 2022-23 Warming Centre operations. The purpose of getting ahead of cold weather (mid-October to mid-April) gives the Collective time to better prepare Warming Centres so that operators in tandem with the City of Nanaimo can identify locations, staffing, and other operational issues. In addition, the opportunity to apply for BC Housing Emergency Weather Response funding is an opportunity that the Nanaimo SPO, in consultation with the City of Nanaimo's Community Planning team, has also initiated, to access funding for weather-driven night-time shelter.

## 1. FUNDING:

*ToR Directive: Focus on cold weather funding only and not on the addition of cooling centre or general shelter development recommendations*

- i. External Funding sources:
  - Emergency Management and Climate Readiness ()
  - Emergency Weather Response (BCH)
- ii. Community Funding:
  - Government: Province, City-Generated, Federal
  - Corporate, Private and Community Foundations

## 2. LOCATION OPTIONS:

*ToR Directive: Provide direction to the City in the form of optional scenarios:*

- i. Service levels are based on specific operating cost price points
- ii. How many people to serve is based on data evidence (previous years, PiT count etc)?
- iii. Underfunding or late approvals of sites and or contracts increase the risk of disruptive behaviour because it negatively impacts the ability of service providers to prepare sites, including neighbours, and adequately staff the centres

## 3. STAFFING:

*ToR Directive: Addressing Staffing Needs is a priority for good service delivery*

- i. Training / Form of Employment / Retention, etc.

## 4. MITIGATING IMPACTS:

*ToR Directive: Mitigating impacts on the community*

- i. Locations dispersed in multiple locations across the City
- ii. Choice of operators includes expectations through an MOU for Standards of Practice
- iii. Good Neighbour Policy and Communications Plan for Each Site
- iv. Longer hours of operation means reduced impacts on communities
- v. Variables are length of time, staffing hours and days

## 5. STANDARDS OF PRACTICE:

- a. Standards of Practice drafted by the collective of service providers is a condition in Warming Centre Operator contracts to guide service delivery

# Introduction:

Warming Centres play a crucial role in providing temporary relief and shelter to individuals during extreme cold weather conditions where temperatures can pose serious health risks. These centers are designed to offer a safe and warm space for individuals who may be experiencing homelessness or those who are otherwise vulnerable to the cold.

The continuum of shelter categories is generally grouped in the following way with respect to cold weather:

- **Overnight Shelters:** year-round shelter services are augmented in the winter months by temporary overnight shelters. In extreme weather, additional emergency shelter spaces are funded by BC Housing for additional overnight spaces
- **Daytime Shelters:** Warming Centres offer daytime warm space for community members. The City of Nanaimo has access to Emergency Management and Climate Readiness provincial funding for levels of severe daytime cold.

Warming Centres serve as a critical resource to prevent cold-related illnesses, injuries, and even fatalities. Unhoused community members often lack access to adequate shelter and heating, making them particularly susceptible to the dangers of extreme cold. Warming Centres can help address this issue by providing a temporary respite from the cold weather.

The following considerations inform this report:

1. **Importance and Purpose:** Warming Centres are essential to protect vulnerable populations, including individuals experiencing homelessness, elderly individuals, and those with limited resources. They provide a space where people can stay warm, access necessities like food and water, and receive support.
2. **Collaboration:** Warming Centres are usually established through collaborative efforts involving government agencies, non-profit organizations, community groups, and volunteers. Coordination among these stakeholders is vital to ensure effective operation and outreach.
3. **Accessibility:** Ensuring that Warming Centres are easily accessible to those in need is crucial. This includes considerations for location, communication, transportation options, and operating hours.
4. **Capacity and Resources:** Adequate staffing, resources, and supplies are essential for the smooth functioning of Warming Centres. This includes warm bedding (for nighttime shelter), hygiene facilities, food, and water.
5. **Health and Safety:** Warming Centres need to adhere to health and safety standards to prevent the spread of illnesses and ensure the well-being of those using the facilities. This might involve COVID-19 precautions, especially during the ongoing pandemic.

6. **Weather Response:** Warming Centres operate during winter months to provide a place to get a break from the cold, the rain, and to feel a measure of comfort and being cared for.
7. **Long-Term Solutions:** While Warming Centres provide immediate relief, they are not a permanent solution to homelessness or vulnerability. Discussions could involve broader strategies for addressing these issues, such as affordable housing, support services, and employment opportunities.
8. **Community Support:** Public awareness and community involvement play a vital role in supporting Warming Centres. Educating the public about their importance and encouraging donations or volunteer efforts can bolster their impact.
9. **Data and Evaluation:** Collecting data on the usage and effectiveness of Warming Centres can help improve their services and inform policy decisions.
10. **Climate Change Considerations:** As climate change impacts weather patterns, discussions could explore how Warming Centres might need to adapt to changing conditions and potentially more frequent extreme weather events. In southern BC, the transition from Warming Centres to cooling centres is increasingly happening quite rapidly, with the spring 2023 gap between the warming and cooling season being a mere 22 days. This suggests that Nanaimo will increasingly need to contemplate the reality of functional year-round locations for warming and cooling.

### ***Funding for Warming Centres: Immediate and Long-term***

Securing funding for Warming Centres involves a combination of government support, community partnerships, and public awareness efforts.

1. **Emergency Funding:** During severe weather events, emergency funds may be allocated to establish and operate Warming Centres. These funds can be used to cover staffing, supplies, facility rental, and other operational costs. The EMCR funding is generally used for daytime extreme weather shelters, while BC Housing's EWR funding has lower thresholds for night-time mats shelter.
2. **Corporate and Community Donations:** Engaging the community through fundraising campaigns, donation drives, and volunteer efforts can significantly contribute to sustaining Warming Centres. Community members, religious groups, and local associations often come together to support such initiatives. This can be an area of consideration for Nanaimo's operation of Warming Centres that will benefit from lead time prior to the times when they are needed.
3. **Grant Opportunities:** Government grants, foundation grants, and community grants are potential funding sources. These grants can be applied for by non-profit organizations and community groups dedicated to providing shelter and support during extreme weather.
4. **Advocacy and Awareness:** Raising public awareness about the importance of Warming Centres can lead to increased public support and donations. Engaging in advocacy efforts to highlight the need for funding can also influence policymakers to allocate resources.



5. **Collaborative Partnerships:** Partnering with other organizations, such as shelters, food banks, and healthcare providers, can help pool resources and increase the overall impact of Warming Centres.
6. **Long-Term Funding Strategies:** While emergency funding is vital, having sustainable, long-term funding strategies is equally important. This may involve creating multi-year budgets, seeking grants with longer durations, and establishing reliable sources of income.
7. **Data and Impact Reporting:** Collecting data on the positive impact of Warming Centres, such as the number of individuals served and the health outcomes achieved, can strengthen funding requests and grant applications.
8. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaboration between public and private sectors can lead to innovative funding solutions. Public-private partnerships may involve joint funding efforts, shared resources, or utilizing public facilities.
9. **Pilot Programs and Success Stories:** Demonstrating the success of warming center initiatives through pilot programs and sharing success stories can attract the attention of potential funders and partners.
10. **Budget Allocation:** Advocating for a portion of the government\* budget to be allocated specifically for extreme weather response, including Warming Centres, can help ensure consistent funding.

Funding for Nanaimo's Warming Centres could include a comprehensive funding approach that involves government support, community engagement, private sector involvement, and strategic partnerships. By working together, stakeholders can ensure that Warming Centres remain a reliable and effective resource for those in need during extreme weather conditions.

# Situation in Nanaimo: 2023-24

The 2023 Nanaimo PiT Count reported that 400 Individuals were experiencing unsheltered homelessness with 120 identified as “sheltered homeless” which represents an overall 20% increase compared to the 2020 Count. Overall these figures are very likely a significant undercount of those experiencing homelessness.<sup>1</sup> And frontline staff including Nanaimo’s newly established Community Safety Officers report that there are about 800-1000 unhoused.

Therefore, on a daily/nightly basis there are likely to be a minimum of 500 plus unhoused individuals plus no access to shelter of any kind in Nanaimo. The Warming Centres in operation last year estimated total attendance in winter months of approximately 120 individuals per day. Clearly, this was a significant underserving of unhoused community members, and there is a deep need to increase the number of people served in 2023-24.

The ongoing experience that continued in 2022-23 remains the challenge of scarce available locations, contract operators who run on limited budgets, barebones staffing. In 2022-23, the City applied for Strengthening Communities funds in April 2022 knowing that there was a need for 2022/23 winter warming services. The Strengthening Communities application was successful and an EOI was sent out Oct 4, 2022 to local service agencies, with only one respondent, that was later withdrawn. The City kept the EOI open, and continued to reach out to find a space and operator. In November, locations and operators were found and warming services provided. The overwhelming challenge underfunding combined with late approvals of sites increased the risk of disruptive behaviour. It did so because both factors negatively impacted the ability of service providers to prepare sites, including neighbours, and adequately staff the centres. There is unanimous agreement among of community service providers that MULTIPLE warming centres that are spread across the City be established because:

- Vulnerable populations are dispersed widely throughout Nanaimo and multiple sites would increase ease of access to more individuals.
- Multiple sites will reduce overall impact on each location’s staff and surrounding neighbourhood.
- Staff and resources were overtaxed in 2022-23 because while there were technically two Warming Centres, they were not open at the same time which resulted in very high numbers at each site when they were open.
- The elevated number of Individuals attending each warming centre was a source of problems for STAFF and the neighbourhood.
- Reducing numbers who attend at each site will reduce impacts on staff and neighbours significantly. CSOs in dialogue with the SPO also emphasised the importance of this approach to minimizing impacts on neighbours.

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<sup>1</sup> A Point-in-Time Count is based on an ‘Enumeration’ which provides a minimum estimate of the numbers of people experiencing homelessness on a single day. PiT Count numbers are representative only of those reached by the PiT Count efforts, rather than reflective of all experiences of homelessness. PiT Count homeless data only represents people staying in participating facilities and those who are approached and consent to participating in the survey. Therefore, PiT count enumerations are known to be an undercount of the homeless population as it is not possible to engage with every homeless person on any given day.

# Funding

There are three major aspects to cold weather response in Nanaimo, and each relies on separate funding sources.

## **Warming Centres:**

Adequate funding is foundational to the successful implementation of Warming Centres – resulting in good programming that leads to hoped-for outcomes, good management that mitigates the impacts on local communities, and safety for all community members: attendees, operator staff, and the general public.

## **Province of BC Emergency Weather Response (EMCR):**

The City's Emergency Weather response actions are guided by the provincial government and are triggered when conditions are more severe than BC Housing's Emergency Weather Response (see next paragraph). The City coordinates the response efforts with community partners. Through this process the City requests funding from Emergency Management British Columbia (EMBC), which is either then approved or denied by EMBC based on very clear definitions that they have for conditions they consider sufficient to warrant a cold weather response. These conditions are:

1. Forecasted or current temperatures of -4 degrees Celsius or below, OR
2. Forecasted or current temperatures of 0 degrees Celsius or below AND a weather warning issued by Environment Canada

The City relies on Environment Canada to provide the weather data and so decisions are dependent on both the Federal or Provincial governments assessment of any incident to determine whether or not the City can respond. In addition to weather conditions, the City must consider the availability of physical space and trained personnel to staff a weather relief initiative. All of these consideration factor into the response for cold weather.

Funding in 2022-23 was from a Union of BC Municipalities 'Strengthening Communities' Services program grant to the City to support daytime extreme weather service, and the City applies for funding for additional hours of service for extreme weather events through the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness.

As in previous years, the EWR program was able to secure bedding supplies through donations from community partners. An example of donated program equipment included blankets received from the Red Cross and BlanketsBC. These supplies were distributed equitably amongst EWR sites who requested them.

## **BC Housing Funded Emergency Weather Response (EWR):**

This program provides nightly operational funding to sites with community EWR plans. Communities augment funding provided by BC Housing with volunteer time and in-kind contributions to meet the basic needs of the program. All EWR programs supplied blankets and mats and most provided breakfast. Those with appropriate resources offered, shower facilities, and clothing. Most EWR sites

were able to provide transit tickets; many provided through the Access to Transit Project, administered by HSABC and funded by BC Housing and Translink.

Nanaimo has not applied for this funding since 2017 when the Unitarian Shelter transitioned to year-round operation. The Nanaimo SPO, in consultation with the City of Nanaimo, has taken the lead on applying for EWR funding for 2023-24, and will be working with community agencies and the City to deliver this program (See “Addendum” for EWR Community Plan Application).

- **RECOMMENDATION #1:** Focus on Warming Centres
- **RECOMMENDATION #2:** There is a need for a year-round Warming / Cooling Centre Strategy and Plan that is based on aligning funding and policy.

In 2022-23, the funding for Warming Centres was drawn from the one-time UBCM Strengthening Communities Services’ Programs (SCSP), which was a shared funding program provided by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia. This funding stream has come to an end and there is yet no funding that has been identified for Warming Centres for the 2023-24 budget year.

UBCM Strengthening Communities funds for two centers in the 2022-2023 winter season totaled \$256,063:

- Risebridge:                      \$ 158,350
- 7-10 Club Society:            \$ 97,713

Services providers indicated that the funding levels are too low to provide for safe and adequate service levels for both staff and Warming Centre clients. In short, to deliver an adequate service the service standards need to be consistent, and adequate baseline staffing costs established.

## **Warming Centre Staff and Operation *per Location* (x 18 Weeks)**

### **Dates / Times of Operation:**

- November 27, 2022 – March 31, 2023 (18 Weeks)
- Monday to Sunday (7 days/week)
- 8:00 – 16:00 (8 hrs/day)

### **Location:**

- 250 Albert St. Nanaimo, BC (Lower level with access off Albert St.)

### **Number of People Served:**

- 20-25 participants in the centre at one time
- Expect to serve over 300 unique individuals and over 4000 visits.
  - Estimate based on the stats from operating the centre for ten weeks last year for seven days a week and 5 hours per day (200 unique individuals, over 2000 visits)

### **Services Provided:**

- Warm beverages
- Snacks
- Harm Reduction Supplies
- Hygiene supplies
- Clothing and survival supplies
- Bathroom facilities
- Shower (possible)
- A warm, dry space for service users.
- Access to referrals for housing, homelessness, health, mental health and substance use services

### **Staffing structure:**

Support and Peer workers will be responsible for the centre's daily operation and manage the flow of participants in and around the location. Additional support is to be provided by our Street Reach and Leadership Teams.

- Two Support Workers (2.8 FTE) • Eight Hours Per Day x 7 Days Per week
- Two Peer Workers (2.8 FTE) • Eight Hours Per Day x 7 Days Per week

### **Partnerships:**

Partnering with Nanaimo Food Share and 7-10 Club to provide space for the provision of breakfast services in conjunction with the Warming Centre.

## DRAFT Warming Centre Budget *Per Location* Cost

November 27, 2023 – March 31, 2024

7.5 Hrs / Day – 18 Weeks

	Hrs/Day	Rate	Benefits	Total / Day	Total / 7 Day Wk
Support Worker 1	7.50	\$28.00	\$8.40	\$273.00	\$1,911.00
Support Worker 1	7.50	\$28.00	\$8.40	\$273.00	\$1,911.00
Peer Worker	8.00	\$27.50		\$220.00	\$1,540.00
Peer Worker	8.00	\$27.50		\$220.00	\$1,540.00
				\$986.00	\$6,902.00
		<b>Totals 18 Weeks</b>			<b>\$124,236.00</b>
Supplies					\$45,000.00
Rent					\$14,000.00
Utilities					\$5,000.00
Insurance					\$6,000.00
Phones					\$600.00
Internet					\$600.00
Survival Supplies					\$35,000.00
					<b>\$230,436.00</b>
Admin Charge 15%					\$34,565.40
					<b>\$265,001.40</b>

## Warming Centre Locations for Consideration

The following locations provide sites for both immediate investigation and possible investigation. The recommendation of multiple locations is based on need to lower impacts on surrounding communities, reduce concentrations of services, and better outcomes for staff and community members.

**Tailoring Locations to Address Geographic as well as Diversity in the Homeless Community.** It is also a consideration that the diversity of community members in need of Warming Centres (e.g. youth, gender specific and diverse, seniors, physical challenges, addition and mental health needs) make it very difficult for any single location to support all needs. While difficult to address everyone's needs, one recommended approach is to designate specific locations (and or times) for groupings of cohorts that will have shared needs, so that Warming Centres are welcoming and well suited for every users' needs.

### **St. Paul's Church (7-10 Club)**

A: Size (capacity): 70 per day

B: location: 100 Chapel Street

C: Catchment: Central / South

D: Transportation Access: Yes – Bus Stops on both sides of it

E: Current Zoning designation (if known): CS1

F: Likelihood (versus current use) of being able to use for warming centre: Yes

### **St. Peter's Church (Nanaimo Family Life Association and Connective Nanaimo)**

A: Size (capacity): 70 per day

B: location: 301 Macleary Street

C: Catchment: Central / South

D: Transportation Access: Yes – Bus Stops on both sides of it

E: Current Zoning designation (if known): CS1

F: Likelihood (versus current use) of being able to use for warming centre: Yes

### **Mid Island Community Connection Centre (Risebridge Project)**

A: Size (capacity): 30 per day

B: location: 520 Prideaux

C: Catchment: Central / South

D: Transportation Access: Yes – Bus Stops on both sides of it

E: Current Zoning designation (if known): CS1

F: Likelihood (versus current use) of being able to use for warming centre: Yes

### **250 Albert St. (CMHA – Mid-Island Branch)**

A: Size (capacity): 30 per day

B: location: 250 Albert Street

C: Catchment: Central / South

D: Transportation Access: Yes – Bus Stops on both sides of it

E: Current Zoning designation (if known): R1

F: Likelihood (versus current use) of being able to use for warming centre: Yes

## **Other Possible Locations:** (Source: City of Nanaimo CSO Team):

### **Former Save On Foods Terminal Park**

- A: Size (capacity): Old grocery store Large capacity
- B: location: 1501 Estevan RD
- C: Catchment: Central / South
- D: Transportation Access: Yes – Bus Stops on both sides of it
- E: Current Zoning designation (if known) : CC3
- F: Likeliness (versus current use) of being able to use for warming centre: Vacant (potential option)

### **Maranatha Foursquare Gospel Church**

- A: Size (capacity): Over 50
- B: Location: 6553 Portsmouth RD
- C: Catchment it will serve, North
- D: Transportation access: Bus Stops along Dickinson
- E: Current zoning designation: CS1
- F: Likeliness (versus current use): Daytime / weekdays

### **Nanaimo North Town Centre (Former Sears Canada location)**

- A: size (capacity): Over 100 (Sears) other location over 100
- B: location / address 4750 Rutherford RD
- C: catchment it will serve, North / Central
- D: transportation access: Bus Stops on all
- E: Current zoning designation: Warming centre is allowed use or would need re-zoning: CC3
- F: Likeliness (versus current use): Good



## Staffing:

**RECOMMENDATION:** Addressing staffing needs is a priority for good delivery of service

In 2022-23, the ratio of staff to client was from 8 to 1 but ran as high as 12 to 1. This proved to be challenging for the delivery of services and created conditions where staff were unable to provide adequate support and contributed to staff burnout.

The skills required to operate a quality and safe environment Warming Centre program are significant. While agencies attempt to provide staff who are adequately trained for the significant demands required for operating a Warming Centre high staff to client ratios are untenable and corrosive on staff.

In addition, the seasonality of Warming Centre employment makes recruitment, in a limited supply environment, very challenging for service agencies to find adequate numbers of staff. And this problem has been exacerbated by the shrinking of the gap in the number of days between Warming Centre and Cooling Centre operations. For example, in the Spring of 2023 Vancouver's gap between Warming Centre and Cooling Centre operations was merely 22 days, which suggests that Nanaimo needs to seriously consider establishing year-round weather-specific locations.

In short, funding for Warming Centres must factor in adequate levels for training, reliable employment terms, and competitive wages to enable retention of adequate numbers of qualified staff.

## Mitigating Community Impact

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Develop multiple locations that are dispersed across the City to assist as many community members as possible.

In 2022-23, the operation of programs at Risebridge and the 7-10 Club at St. Paul's Church in downtown Nanaimo resulted in higher than ideal congregations of people in specific communities, especially when the Centre was closed. Additionally, it meant that other areas of the City had no services for community members in those neighbourhoods.

*A Good Neighbour Policy and Communications Plan* for each site (co-developed with community agencies) is an absolute necessity, including communications and ways for comments and concerns to be addressed authentically and expeditiously.

This needs to be connected to programming so that real time operational adjustments are possible.

Longer hours of operation are one way, perhaps counterintuitively, to reduce impacts on local communities. When a Centre has less open hours, the flow of local traffic is compressed and this can result in higher congregations of individuals.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Service Agencies identified a keen need to align hours of operation between Warming Centres and agencies serving vulnerable populations.

Ideally there should be round the clock coverage and access to some form of shelter in extreme weather situations. This can be funded during EWR designated nights through BC Housing. (See Addendum for the DRAFT Emergency Weather Response Community Plan application).

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** Allow (paid) time in Warming Centre schedules and budgets to allow for Cleaning and Maintenance as well staff hours for centre maintenance and staff respite from emergency programming.

This is self-evident, but is easily overlooked in budget considerations. To wit, cleaning is an allowable expense in BC Housing's EWR program funding, but not staff hours when the Centre is not in use.

## Nanaimo Warming Centre Checklist for Mitigating Impacts

Creating effective Warming Centres in Nanaimo involves a careful combination of planning, community collaboration, and resource allocation. Here are some recommendations to consider for establishing and operating Warming Centres in Nanaimo:

1. **Assessing Need:** Conduct a thorough assessment of the local need for Warming Centres. Analyze weather patterns, the number of homeless individuals, and vulnerable populations to determine the scale and number of the centers required.
2. **Location Selection:** Choose accessible locations that are close to areas where homeless individuals tend to congregate or where vulnerable populations are prevalent. Consider access to public transportation and proximity to services like healthcare facilities and food sources.
3. **Collaborative Partnerships:** Collaborate with local government agencies, non-profit organizations, community groups, and shelters. These partnerships can help pool resources, share expertise, and ensure a coordinated approach.
4. **Partnerships in Weather-Related Preparedness Planning:** The operation of Warming Centre(s) and EWR is a community effort that draws on the assets that the City of Nanaimo, community service agencies contribute to response planning. This includes protocols for opening Warming Centres and Emergency Weather Response temporary shelters, and temporary emergency shelters (also funded by BC Housing). While the City is responsible for Emergency Response Planning and activation, extreme weather response in communities across BC are often led by community-based agencies.
5. **Flexible Operating Hours:** Warming Centres benefit from flexibility in operating hours to accommodate various schedules. This could involve overnight operations, extended evening hours, and early morning access.
6. **Adequate Staffing:** Ensure that Warming Centres are adequately staffed with trained personnel. Staff members should be knowledgeable about the needs of the homeless population, basic first aid, conflict resolution, and relevant social services. This can be communicated by applicants in

the form of committing to recognized Standards of Practice (e.g. Imagine Canada, Canada Accreditation) either formally or informally.

7. **Warmth and Comfort:** Provide warm bedding, blankets, and seating arrangements to ensure the comfort of visitors. Adequate heating systems and insulation are essential to maintain a warm and safe environment.
8. **Basic Amenities:** Offer basic amenities such as restrooms, showers, and hygiene supplies. Access to clean drinking water and nutritious food is also crucial.
9. **Health and Safety Measures:** Establish health and safety protocols, especially considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Implement measures such as physical distancing, mask-wearing, regular sanitization, and health screenings.
10. **Resource Support:** Seek support from local businesses, community organizations, and volunteers to provide resources like warm clothing, blankets, and toiletries.
11. **Case Management Services:** Collaborate with social workers and service providers to offer on-site case management services. This can help connect individuals to housing options, healthcare services, and employment opportunities.
12. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Be aware of the diverse needs of the population you're serving. Consider cultural sensitivities and language barriers when designing the center's operations.
13. **Community Engagement:** Involve the community through awareness campaigns, volunteer opportunities, and donation drives. Engaged communities are more likely to support and sustain the operations of Warming Centres.
14. **Data Collection and Reporting:** Collect data on the number of visitors, demographics, and services provided. This information can be used to demonstrate the impact of the warming center and support future funding requests.
15. **Long-Term Solutions:** While Warming Centres are essential for immediate relief, work in parallel on long-term solutions to homelessness, such as affordable housing initiatives and comprehensive support programs.
16. **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Regularly gather feedback from visitors, staff, and partners to make improvements to the warming center's operations and services.

The City's Community Planners/Emergency Response are engaging community service agencies to inventory available resources for emergency weather response, including Warming Centres to provide crucial support to vulnerable individuals during extreme weather conditions.

# Standards of Practice:

One of the ways in which Nanaimo can best manage limited community resources to address homelessness is by establishing standards of practice that our community of service providers commit to upholding.

Standards of practice are built around common principles and guidelines that professionals in this field typically adhere to. These standards are designed to ensure the well-being and rights of individuals and communities receiving social services. Here are some key aspects of community social services standards of practice:

1. **Client-Centered Approach:** Social service professionals should always prioritize the best interests and needs of their clients. This includes respecting their autonomy and involving them in decision-making whenever possible.
2. **Ethical Conduct:** Adherence to a strong code of ethics is essential. This includes maintaining confidentiality, avoiding conflicts of interest, and upholding the highest standards of integrity and professionalism.
3. **Cultural Competence:** Professionals should be culturally competent, meaning they should have an understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences of their clients. Cultural competence helps in providing more effective and respectful services.
4. **Evidence-Based Practice:** Social service professionals should base their interventions and decisions on evidence-based practices whenever possible. This means using research and data to inform their work and continuously evaluating the effectiveness of their interventions.
5. **Collaboration:** Collaboration with other professionals and agencies is often necessary in community social services. This includes working closely with healthcare providers, educators, law enforcement, and other stakeholders to ensure comprehensive care and support for clients.
6. **Advocacy:** Social service professionals often act as advocates for their clients, helping them access needed services and resources, and advocating for policy changes that benefit the community.
7. **Self-Care:** Professionals in this field are often exposed to challenging and emotionally draining situations. Self-care is crucial to prevent burnout and maintain the ability to provide effective support to clients.
8. **Continuing Education:** Keeping up to date with the latest research, theory, knowledge, practices, and policies in the field is essential. This often involves participating in ongoing training and professional development. It requires commitment to lifelong learning.
9. **Legal Compliance:** Social service professionals must be knowledgeable about and adhere to all relevant laws and regulations governing their field of practice. This includes laws related to child protection, mental health, disability services, GB+ analysis and more.
10. **Documentation:** Accurate and thorough record-keeping is essential. This includes maintaining confidential client records and documenting all interactions, assessments, and interventions.

11. **Safety:** Ensuring the safety of clients, especially vulnerable populations, is paramount. This includes taking appropriate steps to assess and mitigate risks, such as child abuse or neglect, domestic violence, or self-harm.
12. **Respect and Dignity:** All clients should be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their circumstances. This includes using respectful language and avoiding stigmatization.

Nanaimo's leading community service providers recommend that standards of practice are an important contribution to the ability to work more collaboratively and effectively. This commitment can be reflected as a condition of awarding contracts for Operators of Warming Centre locations.

## Conclusion:

The operation of Warming Centres is necessary for the benefit of both the community of clients and Nanaimo. It promotes safety and reduces the impacts on community when well managed and adequately staffed.

This is only possible with adequate funding and adding centres to help reduce client numbers per location.

The lack of provincial funding for warming centre operations is a significant risk; more importantly, the risks to unsheltered community members in need warming centres outweighs budgetary arguments to the contrary.

While the 3 Vancouver Island Library branches in Nanaimo welcome community members, there is also the need for warming centre options for those who need additional services for their specific needs.

In addition to the downtown offerings of 2022-23, there is a need to provide warming centre services for community members in the north of the City. Furthermore, there is a need to tailor warming centres to the needs of specific cohorts. For example, for aging community members without substance use or mental health specific needs.

A commitment to year-round warming/cooling centre operation is highly recommended as a result of the combined effects of climate change (which has reduced the time between warming/cooling centre needs), the high number of unsheltered community members (continuing to increase disproportionately to the population), combined with the challenges of retaining qualified staffing.

# **Addendum: Nanaimo EWR (BC Housing) Community Plan**

September 30, 2023

## Extreme Weather (Overnight) Response Fund : BC Housing

BC Housing *Extreme Weather Response* (EWR) program is a provincially funded initiative that supports community-based services for overnight services to provide additional temporary emergency shelter spaces during periods of extreme winter weather which threaten the health and safety of individuals experiencing homelessness. In Nanaimo, the operating agreement and funding will be between BC Housing and the lead local agency.

This program is designed to provide time-limited, weather responsive, temporary shelter spaces in communities where there is not sufficient emergency shelter bed capacity during extreme weather conditions. The expected outcomes of the EWR program are decreased health and safety risks to homeless people during periods of extreme winter weather, and a reduction of street homelessness during extreme winter weather.

Funding is provided based on a per space per night basis and is negotiated by BC Housing with each individual service provider. Communities are expected to have an established community plan that identifies a lead agency and ensures the BC Housing EWR Framework is adhered to by service providers (See: <https://hsa-bc.ca/program-outline.html>). Funding is for operational aspects of the EWR only and only for over night hours.

The challenge is that Extreme Weather Response funding is contingent on certain low temperature thresholds. As such, it can be very challenging for service providers to have adequately skilled staff available on very short notice for unknown lengths of time. (SEE EWR BCH Policy DOC for details: <https://www.bchousing.org/publications/Extreme-Weather-Response-Program-Framework.pdf>)

### Resources for Extreme Weather Overnight Program:

HSABC (who administer the EWR for BC Housing) provides examples of Community Plans, roles and responsibilities, EWR framework, and BC aggregated data on occupancies and planning table reports:

- The HSABC team convenes EWR Working groups and supports communities to update plans each season. As a reminder an EWR plan has been developed at the community level to help support EWR program implementation.
- *EWR Information Sheet*- tailored as an information tool for Vancouver *site prospecting* but the information regarding roles and responsibilities is the same in every community as part of the *BCH EWR Program Framework*. Last updated in 2011 but is the most recent framework available.
- *Metro Vancouver EWR Report*. Each season HSABC compiles aggregate data from occupancy reports and survey findings as well as feedback from community and regional planning



tables and generates a Regional EWR report. Last season we also included some weather data as the impacts of climate change have been quite significant over the past few winters.

- HSABC's training program ([training calendar](#)). Organizations can support staff training through an HSABC [membership](#) for year round access to live webinars, in person trainings and recorded webinars previously delivered.

#### **Provincial Support for Upcoming EWR season, 2023 – 2024.**

The Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization has submitted the application (below) for the 2023-24 EWR season, and has identified locations, spaces, hours of opening. This has triggered follow-up discussions about contract details and opportunities for the lead organization to access database HIFIS training and user account creation where needed.



**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of the Extreme Weather Response Plan is to maintain an operating structure which provides temporary sheltering resources for people who are experiencing homelessness. Extreme Weather Response shelters outlined in this plan are accessible during periods of extreme cold weather only, and importantly *only for overnight hours*. Nominally EWR locations are open from 7pm to 7:00 am but there is room for variation in operating hours within the Extreme Weather Response Framework (BC Housing, 2011).

Nanaimo's homelessness numbers continue to rise as evidenced by a preliminary review of the data from the Nanaimo 2023 Reaching Home Coordinated Point-in-Time (PiT) Count. Based on the 2023 PiT Count the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo has increased by about 20% since the 2020 count from 433 to 514 (+/-5). Of relevance to this plan, 80% of the 2023 total had *no access to shelter of any kind on a daily/nightly basis* which equates to approximately 400 individuals. Nanaimo's emergency shelter capacity is approximately 100 but rises to 140-50 in the Winter months due to the opening of temporary emergency shelter spaces. And it must be noted that due to the PiT Count methodology the number of individuals identified as experiencing homelessness is always an underestimate.

It is clear from current data and up to date reports from frontline service agency staff, RCMP and first responders that there is a profound shortage of emergency shelter spaces in Nanaimo compared to the need. The EWR Program will provide some much-needed relief in this regard.

Extreme Weather Shelters are part of a continuum of resources designed to support those in need during the winter months. This program is intended to support a temporary crisis response in communities where emergency shelter bed capacity is insufficient during extreme weather conditions.

EWR services and resources are *limited and are not intended* to fill community needs around year-round shelter services, supportive housing, or long-term affordable housing options. This plan outlines a temporary response aimed at reducing the risk to the life and health of individuals experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo during the winter months.

NOTE: This plan is separate and distinct from the City of Nanaimo's *Emergency Response and Recovery Plan* and related municipally organized responses to Extreme Heat and Cold. Over time the aim is to align the policy and operations outlined in this plan with the City's Emergency Response Plan.

**EXTREME WEATHER ALERT:**

In Nanaimo, Extreme for the purposes of this plan is defined as conditions deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life and/or health of individuals experiencing homelessness. In the municipality of Nanaimo, Extreme Weather Response Alerts are issued when the following criteria are met:

- Temperatures at or below 0 degrees Celsius; and/or
- Significant snow accumulation or sleet/freezing rain conditions; and/or

- Significant windstorms that may present danger to persons living in wooded areas and/or makeshift shelters (cardboard boxes or lean-tos); and/or
- Rainfall of at least 50mm in a 24-hour period or periods of extended heavy rain creating conditions of ground saturation; and/or Temperatures near zero degrees with rainfall that makes it difficult or impossible for those experiencing homelessness to remain dry; and/or Temperatures reported as 'feels like' zero degrees Celsius or below with wind chill considerations; and/or Weather Alerts as issued by Environment Canada – wind warnings, excessive rain, snowfall warnings, storm surges in tidal areas, etc.

BC Housing acknowledges each community's plan is based on recognition of its own unique geography, climate, resources, and clientele. Due to differences in forecasted conditions, an "Extreme Weather Response" alert may be enacted in Nanaimo when other Vancouver Island areas may not be facing extreme conditions.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE**

EWR sites offer a warm place to sleep for a limited amount of time, a warm meal and if possible, a bus ticket. *There are no enhanced services available at the sites.* Due to the nature and purpose of the Extreme Weather Response Shelters, these sites should not be considered as permanent shelters. Extreme Weather sites open in response to inclement weather events which place the health and safety of individuals living outside at risk.

To prevent program drift in the extreme weather response plan, readers need to be aware that Extreme Weather sites have limited ability to respond to needs and cannot operate on a 24-hour basis. Readers must also understand that individuals who need more resources than a warm place to sleep for a night should not be discharged to these sites. Extreme Weather sites in this plan have limited ability to respond to needs and cannot operate on a 24-hour basis.

### **COORDINATOR**

The role of Extreme Weather Response Coordinator in Nanaimo is supported through the Canadian Mental Health Association: Mid-Island Branch. As the Designated Community Representative, CMHA works with community partners to update and submit the community plan to BC Housing after consultation with a broad range of stakeholders to ensure EWR shelter capacity meets the needs of community.

In addition, this role monitors weather conditions and provides day to day direction about issuing and cancelling Extreme Weather Alerts in compliance with the Assistance to Shelter Act. Decisions to activate an alert are based on weather forecasts, perceived, or expressed need for shelter space in communities, site availability, and staffing capacity to open facilities overnight.

### **EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE PLAN**

The EWR Coordinator will continue to work with the Nanaimo EWR Working Group to revise the text of this plan as it develops. Updates will be shared with staff from the City of Nanaimo.

This plan is a working document and will be revised as needed during an Extreme Weather season if circumstances warrant it. All pertinent departments, individuals and organizations participating in the Extreme Weather Response will have an up-to-date copy of the Extreme Weather Response Plan. An up-to-date version of the Extreme Weather Response Plan will be submitted to City staff and participating organizations after it has been submitted to BC Housing.

## COMMUNICATION

Following the decision to activate an Extreme Weather Alert, notifications will be widely distributed to build awareness around EWR shelter capacity in Nanaimo. Communications regarding alert activations and deactivations will be sent by the Designated Community Representative, for now CMHA Mid- Island through the following notification lists:

- **Official:** this list consists of RCMP/police detachments, City officials, and BCH EWR communications. Messaging is sent to this specific list utilizing the official activation, deactivation, and location amendment templates. (see Appendix A) This notification triggers or cancels the Assistance to Shelter Act. No attachment is provided.
- **Heads Up:** this list consists of social service providers, managers or site leads responsible for mobilizing responses. Messaging is sent to this list ahead of alerts and deactivations to outline forecasted conditions and communicate both potential and confirmed activation timelines. Communication to this list is followed by text confirmations.
- **Community:** this list consists of the broader community. Messaging is sent to this larger list consisting of bc211, health, social service and faith-based organizations, meal programming, outreach, transit, bylaw, city, and any other community representatives wishing to be notified of weather alerts. This email has an attachment outlining site locations, services offered, hours of operation, etc. and the number of days open so community members can print, post, and share EWR resources.

\* Contacts can be placed on multiple lists

## MOBILIZING EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSES

Whenever possible, the Nanaimo EWR Coordinator will work on anticipating openings using a “three-day window” of lead time to inform those responsible for mobilizing EWR sites of potential activations. When weather conditions are variable or forecasts shift, the Nanaimo EWR Coordinator will provide as much notification as possible. Extreme Weather sites will open as needed when an Extreme Weather Alert is called. The Extreme Weather Response Coordinator will support EWR activations through the following procedures:

**Days Prior to Alert** (As possible – recognizing weather changes quickly at times)

- Email shelter providers and site leads a ‘heads up’ notification confirming forecasted conditions and anticipated activation/deactivation dates.
- Follow up with a direct text to service providers and site leads ensuring representatives are aware of potential activation status.

- Continue to monitor weather conditions.
- Compose email using 'EWR Official Alert Activation text' and send to the EWR Official Alert Notification email list. See Official Template for Issuing Extreme Weather Alerts (RCMP Detachment) in Appendix A.
- Compose email using 'Community EWR Notification' template and send to Nanaimo EWR Community Notification list with a list of open shelters attached. Community Notifications will be sent by 11am whenever possible.
- Send Official Location Amendments and community updates in the event EWR shelter locations change during an active alert. See Official Template for Changing Location During Extreme Weather Alerts (RCMP Detachment) in Appendix A.

#### **On the Day of the Alert Deactivation**

- Confirm weather conditions no longer meet EW Alert criteria. Notify shelter providers and site leads in advance via email and text confirmation.
- Compose email using 'EWR Official Alert Deactivation text' and send to the EWR Official Alert Notification email list. See Official Template for Cancelling Extreme Weather Alerts (RCMP Detachment)
- Compose email and send alert deactivation update to Nanaimo EWR Community Notification list.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

If possible, participating organizations will utilize staff and vans to transport people to other sites if maximum occupancy has been reached. Sites will also support transportation by providing a bus ticket to shelter guests who are leaving in the morning.

#### **MEDIA INQUIRIES**

The EWR Coordinator acts as spokesperson for Nanaimo Extreme Weather Responses. BC Housing will offer media support in case of major media interest (e.g. if a controversial issue develops) or should it become necessary to coordinate the media response between communities. B.C. Housing will designate a media contact person at the beginning of each season.

#### **SUPPLIES**

The Coordinator where possible will assist all shelters in the plan with needed supplies such as food, blankets, first aid kits and any other equipment needed.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

All participating agencies will communicate information relevant to the Extreme Weather Response Program through the Coordinator and his/her designates during the period of the Response. The intent of this procedure is to minimize confusion and avoid duplication of effort. We will also work in concert with City of Nanaimo Communications Officer and Evan Lloyd Emergency Services Manager.

#### **TRAINING**

The Nanaimo Extreme Weather Response Coordinator will support volunteers and staff to access appropriate training in areas which support their roles in the plan. Training resources will include

curriculum adapted from the EWR Resource Guide. Additional considerations will also include community specific issues and information, personal safety techniques, health precautions for volunteers/staff and emergency procedures. Support and information will also be available through the training program at the Homelessness Services Association of British Columbia.

### **AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Activation plans for each of the sites will be developed by the organizations that operate them. Each facility director will manage their site but may call upon other agencies for assistance.

#### **Each site will:**

- Have its shelter premises inspected by the Fire Department and the City Engineering Department to confirm its maximum capacity with assistance from the EWR Coordinator.
- Provide appropriate numbers of volunteer and staff for its emergency weather shelter (through collaboration with local Fire Services).
- Provide a meal for the people accessing the services when they come in at night.

#### **Each site will also endeavor to:**

- Provide something for breakfast and a bag lunch if possible.
- Provide a bus ticket if requested.
- Have access to a storage area for peoples' belongings.

### **INSURANCE AND CAPACITY CERTIFICATION**

BC Housing requires shelter operators to hold a \$5M Commercial Liability Policy for each site. In addition, each site will be inspected by City fire officials to determine their appropriate occupancy load before listing them in the Extreme Weather Response Plan.

### **SITE FIRE PLANS**

All extreme weather sites have a written Fire Plan in place that can be viewed by the Fire Department. A copy of the Site Fire Plan will also be sent to the Coordinator of the Extreme Weather Response Program to be placed on file for that location. The Nanaimo Coordinator will notify BC Housing and the Regional Extreme Weather Response Coordinator that all sites in Nanaimo have a written Fire Plan in place. See Fire Safety Planning in Appendix B.

#### **All Fire Plans will have the following in place:**

- Diagram /Chart of site bed locations and fire exits
- Procedure for notifying Fire Department of a fire at the location
- Procedure for evacuation which includes a head count, and designated safe meeting area.
- Method to inform the firefighters attending the site who is in what bed and where that bed is located in the building
- How to ensure fire fighters have access to the whole building to allow them to inspect the whole building.

### **REPORTING ACTIVITY AND EXPENSES**

BC Housing forms will be used to record all intake data and expenses at each shelter. Nightly Occupancy Report forms have been retired by BC Housing. Service providers will enter nightly occupancy into the HIFIS database. Sites will email [dstaplet@bchousing.org](mailto:dstaplet@bchousing.org) if they require assistance with entering data

into HIFIS (including login info). Occupancy data will also be made available to Nanaimo EWR Coordinator via e-mail provided below. After opening sites for the extreme response, each site will ensure that their nightly occupancy data is sent into BC Housing by 11:00 am the following day. Invoices need to be sent in a timely manner as BC Housing specifies in order to ensure payment is made.

### **OUTREACH**

In addition to the temporary emergency shelter, outreach services will be conducted for individuals who choose to remain outside. Food and blankets will be handed out when available. Mobile outreach workers will work collaboratively with the RCMP and City of Nanaimo Bylaws Department to connect with those who choose to remain outside during Extreme Weather activation.

### **ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO REMAIN OUTSIDE**

RCMP, Police, City staff and first responders working at the time of an Extreme Weather activation who come into contact with unsheltered individuals will inform (and assist them if they require it) to Extreme Weather spaces that have been activated in the City of Nanaimo.

### **IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD**

The Extreme Weather response is active according to the number of nights that meet the Nanaimo Alert criteria as defined in the Extreme Weather Response Plan. EWR activities will take place during the six-month period between October 15 and April 15 as weather conditions occur.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Shelters generally operate between 7:00 pm and 7:30 am. However, each shelter determines its own opening and closing times based on the needs of the site and communicates them to the Nanaimo EWR Coordinator.

### **EVALUATION & PLAN REVISION**

The Extreme Weather Planning Group will reconvene before May 31, to assess the implementation of the current Response Plan and to amend it as required for the following season.

### **CITY ZONING REGULATIONS**

Due to the extraordinary and occasional nature of Extreme Weather Shelter use, the City will not enforce its Zoning Bylaw in respect of this use if and when:

- Such a use is triggered by an Extreme Weather Response alert or;
- All shelter facilities to be used are identified in the Extreme Weather Response Plan, as approved by the Director of Development Services.

This would be a similar situation to the use of schools, churches and other facilities for temporary lodging and staging during an emergency/disaster event. There is a clear intent that Extreme Weather Shelters are not intended to be used for permanent housing.

Occupancy limits posted by the individual community's Fire Rescue Service may not be exceeded in any shelter facility without approval by the Fire Chief. In select cases, an interim Fire Safety Plan including a 24-hour fire watch may be considered to mitigate the lack of sufficient exit capacity with the approval of the Fire Chief.

#### **SITES OPENED AFTER THE EWR PLAN IS SUBMITTED**

Due to the nature and processes involved in setting up EWR sites, some sites may not be ready to operate at the start of the EWR season. After these sites have passed all inspections by the Fire Department, the Coordinator will submit an updated plan. The Coordinator will inform all stakeholders of the sites coming into operation. Notification of a site being opened will include site address, contact details, and site capacity. The Nanaimo plan will be revised and redistributed as needed.

#### **EXTREME WEATHER SHELTERS FOR Nanaimo**

NB: Please note we will be onboarding more locations and revise the list of sites as needed.

Location	Operator	# of Mats	Time	Population Served
250 Albert St	CMHA Mid-Island	30	7pm – 7:30am	All 19+

**Nanaimo EWR Participating Partners  
'Heads up' Communications List**

Nanaimo Family Life Association	Deborah Hollins	778-269-3212
7-10 Club	Gord Fuller	250-797-0531
City of Nanaimo	Christy Wood - Social Planning	Christy.Wood@nanaimo.ca
City of Nanaimo	Evan Lloyd - Emergency Serv.	Evan.Lloyd@nanaimo.ca
Vancouver Island Regional Libraries	Ben Hyman	BHyman@virl.bc.ca
Tillicum Lelum	TBA	250-753-6578
Connective Nanaimo	Andrew Ferguson / Anne Marie Tosh	250-754-1266
Salvation Army	Bern Muller	250-714-1142
Pacifica Housing	Kayla Lilledhal	250-933-1940
Nanaimo Youth Services Assoc.	TBA	250-754-1989
Risebridge Project	Jovonne Johnson	risebridgeproject@gmail.com
Island Health	TBA	
Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction	TBA	
Snuneymuxw First Nation	TBA (Housing Outreach?)	
Unitarian Shelter	Jessica Wilson	250-754-720
Island Crisis Care Society	Violet Hayes / Michelle Authier	778-441-4227
Haven Society	TBA	250-756-2452



**Winter Extreme Weather Response (EWR) Program  
BC Housing Contacts 2023 - 2024**

<b>Winter Extreme Weather Contact</b>	<b>Email address</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Daisy Stapleton, <b>Supportive Housing &amp; Programs</b>	dstaplet@bchousing.org	<b>604-439-4150</b>

<b>What Is It?</b>	<b>By When Should It Be Completed?</b>	<b>Who and How to Contact BC Housing</b>	
Community EWR Plan	September 30, 2023	Email to BCH Extreme Weather Contact (see above)	
Nightly Shelter Budgets	September 30, 2023	Email to BCH Extreme Weather Contact (see above)	
Activation and Deactivation of EWR	As soon as you know a response is being activated or cancelled	Email:	
			<a href="mailto:EWRAAlerts@bchousing.org">EWRAAlerts@bchousing.org</a>
		In NON RCMP Detachments	Local Police department email contact
		In RCMP Detachments	<a href="mailto:EDIV_FEDERAL_OCC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca">EDIV_FEDERAL_OCC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca</a>
Occupancy Reports	By 11am the following business day of an EWR	Enter into <b>HIFIS</b> database	
EWR Invoice (for payment)	Submit invoices for related costs twice a month for each relevant period.	By fax or email to your region's extreme weather contact. The two invoice periods are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>, invoices should be submitted by the 17<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• 16<sup>th</sup> – end of month, invoices should be submitted by 2<sup>nd</sup> of the following month</li> </ul>	
Media Response	As soon as you know	Any media releases with regard to EWR must be forwarded in draft form to your region's representative and BC Housing's Communications Branch for comments and final approval before release.  Email: <b>BCH EWR contact listed above</b> <b>AND</b> <a href="mailto:media@bchousing.org">media@bchousing.org</a>	

All Extreme Weather Forms are available on-line at [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org), or you can email EWR contact.

## Appendix A: Communication Templates

### TEMPLATE FOR ISSUING AN EXTREME WEATHER ALERT – NON-RCMP POLICE DETACHMENTS

Email Subject Line: CITY OF NANAIMO - Extreme Weather Alert Issued

Please note that all emails must have the subject line as stated above. Also, it is important that the e-mail be sent to the following recipients, with no attachments, in addition to the existing list of recipients that BC Housing has provided:

The Police Department e-mail contact(s) provided in the e-mail where this document was attached.

[EWRAAlerts@bchousing.org](mailto:EWRAAlerts@bchousing.org)

Text template for e-mail:

Hello,

*I have been designated under the Assistance to Shelter Act as the Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of the CITY OF NANAIMO British Columbia. I am issuing an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) for the (town/municipality/village/township) of the CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

*It would be appreciated if the police department in receipt of this e-mail acknowledged receipt of this message to me only – no other recipients need to reply. You will be advised via e-mail when the EWA has been cancelled.*

*Thanks in advance for your assistance,*

*(Name of Community Representative)*

#### Extreme Weather Alert

*Pursuant to sec. 2(2)(b) of the Assistance to Shelter Act an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) is being issued for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia. This EWA activates the authorities in the Assistance to Shelter Act for police to assist persons at risk due to extreme weather conditions and remains in effect until it is cancelled.*

*This EWA is being issued on (date) at (time), due to the following weather conditions and forecast: (description of conditions and forecast.)*

*The following shelter(s) will be providing spaces during this EWA:*

*(Name of shelters and locations)*

*EWA issued by: (name of Community Representative), Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

## TEMPLATE FOR CANCELLING AN EXTREME WEATHER ALERT – NON-RCMP POLICE DETACHMENTS

Email Subject Line: CITY OF NANAIMO - Extreme Weather Alert Cancelled

Please note that all emails must have the subject line as stated above. Also, it is important that the e-mail be sent to the following recipients, with no attachments, in addition to the existing list of recipients that BC Housing has provided:

The Police Department e-mail contact(s) provided in the e-mail where this document was attached.

[EWRAAlerts@bchousing.org](mailto:EWRAAlerts@bchousing.org)

An Extreme Weather Alert cancellation email is imperative as cancels the activation of the Assistance to Shelter Act.

Text template for e-mail:

*Hello,*

*I have been designated under the Assistance to Shelter Act as the Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

*On (date) I issued an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

*There is no longer a need for the EWA to remain in effect and, as such, I am issuing a Cancellation of an EWA. It would be appreciated if the police department in receipt of this e-mail acknowledged receipt of this message to me only – no other recipients need to reply.*

*Thanks again for your assistance,*

*(Name of Community Representative)*

### *Cancellation of an Extreme Weather Alert*

*Pursuant to sec. 2(2)(e) of the Assistance to Shelter Act the Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) issued on (date) for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia, is now cancelled. The authorities in the Assistance to Shelter Act for police to assist persons at risk due to extreme weather conditions are no longer in effect.*

*This Cancellation of an EWA is being issued on (date) at (time), due to improved weather conditions and forecast.*

*Cancellation of an EWA issued by: (Name of Community Representative), Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

## TEMPLATE FOR ISSUING AN EXTREME WEATHER ALERT – RCMP DETACHMENTS

Email Subject Line: CITY OF NANAIMO - Extreme Weather Alert Issued

Please note that all emails must have the subject line as stated above ONLY. Failing to use the appropriate subject line may jeopardize the appropriate RCMP detachment from being informed of the Alert.

Also, it is important that the e-mail be sent to the following recipients, with no attachments, in addition to the existing list of recipients that BC Housing has provided:

[EDIV\\_FEDERAL\\_OCC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca](mailto:EDIV_FEDERAL_OCC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca); [EWRAlerts@bchousing.org](mailto:EWRAlerts@bchousing.org)

Text template for e-mail:

*Hello,*

*I have been designated under the Assistance to Shelter Act as the Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia. I am issuing an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA), and it is requested that RCMP "E" HQ OCC send the below noted EWA verbatim via CPIC to the detachment responsible for policing the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

*I request that only "E" HQ OCC confirm receipt of this e-mail and advise when the CPIC message has been forwarded to the appropriate detachment. You will be advised via email when the EWA has been rescinded.*

*Thanks in advance for your assistance,*

*(Name of Community Representative)*

### **Extreme Weather Alert**

*Pursuant to sec. 2(2)(b) of the Assistance to Shelter Act an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) is being issued for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia. This EWA activates the authorities in the Assistance to Shelter Act for police to assist persons at risk due to extreme weather conditions and remains in effect until it is canceled.*

*This EWA is being issued on (date) at (time), due to the following weather conditions and forecast: (description of conditions and forecast.)*

*The following shelter(s) will be providing spaces during this EWA:  
(Name of shelters and locations)*

*EWA issued by: (name of Community Representative), Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

## TEMPLATE FOR CANCELLING AN EXTREME WEATHER ALERT – RCMP DETACHMENTS

Email Subject Line: *CITY OF NANAIMO* - Extreme Weather Alert Cancelled

Please note that all emails must have the subject line as stated above ONLY. Failing to use the appropriate subject line may jeopardize the appropriate RCMP detachment from being informed of the Alert.

Also it is important that the e-mail be sent to the following recipients, with no attachments, in addition to the existing list of recipients that BC Housing has provided:

[EDIV\\_FEDERAL\\_OCC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca](mailto:EDIV_FEDERAL_OCC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca); [EWRAAlerts@bchousing.org](mailto:EWRAAlerts@bchousing.org)

An Extreme Weather Alert cancellation email is imperative as cancels the activation of the Assistance to Shelter Act.

Text template for e-mail:

*Hello,*

*I have been designated under the Assistance to Shelter Act as the Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

*On (date) I issued an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) and requested RCMP "E" HQ OCC sent it to the detachment responsible for policing the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia. There is no longer a need for the EWA to remain in effect and, as such, I am issuing a Cancellation of an EWA. I am now requesting that "E" HQ OCC forward verbatim via CPIC the below noted Cancellation of an EWA to the detachment responsible for policing the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia. I request that only "E" HQ OCC confirm receipt of this e-mail and advise when the CPIC message has been forwarded to the appropriate detachment.*

*Thanks in advance for your assistance,*

*(Name of Community Representative)*

### **Cancellation of an Extreme Weather Alert**

*Pursuant to sec. 2(2)(e) of the Assistance to Shelter Act the Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) issued on (date) for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia, is now cancelled. The authorities in the Assistance to Shelter Act for police to assist persons at risk due to extreme weather conditions are no longer in effect.*

*This Cancellation of an EWA is being issued on (date) at (time), due to improved weather conditions and forecast.*

*Cancellation of an EWA issued by: (Name of Community Representative), Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*



**TEMPLATE FOR CHANGING LOCATION DURING AN EXTREME WEATHER ALERT – RCMP DETACHMENTS AND NON-RCMP POLICE DETACHMENTS**

Email Subject Line: *CITY OF NANAIMO* - Extreme Weather Alert – location amendment

Please note that all emails must have the subject line as stated above ONLY. Failing to use the appropriate subject line may jeopardize the appropriate RCMP detachment from being informed of the Alert.

Also, it is important that the e-mail be sent to the following recipients, with no attachments, in addition to the existing list of recipients that BC Housing has provided:

[EDIV\\_FEDERAL\\_OCC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca](mailto:EDIV_FEDERAL_OCC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca) or The Police Department e-mail contact(s)

[EWRAAlerts@bchousing.org](mailto:EWRAAlerts@bchousing.org)

Text template for e-mail:

*Hello,*

*I have been designated under the Assistance to Shelter Act as the Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

*On \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_ I issued an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

*Effective \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_, the following changes have been made to the site(s) that are open for the current EWA:*

*Shelter Site(s) Now Closed:*

*[Shelter details, including address]*

*Shelter Site(s) Now Open:*

*[Shelter details, including address]*

*I have been designated under the Assistance to Shelter Act as the Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia. I am issuing an Extreme Weather Alert (EWA) for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

*It would be appreciated if the police department in receipt of this e-mail acknowledged receipt of this message to me only – no other recipients need to reply. You will be advised via e-mail when the EWA has been cancelled.*

*Thanks for your assistance,*

*[Name]*

*EWA issued by: [Name], Community Representative for the (town/municipality/village/township) of CITY OF NANAIMO, British Columbia.*

## Appendix B: Fire Services – Training Check List

### FIRE SERVICES EXTREME WEATHER SHELTER TRAINING CHECK LIST

<b>Building Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Contact</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Supervisor</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Phone</b>	

- How to call 911
- Evacuation procedures explained
- Location of Fire Extinguishers
- Location of Fire Alarm Panel
- Fire Alarm Panel functional
- Emergency Lighting functional
- Emergency Exits clear
- Sprinkler System functional

**It is the responsibility of the owner, agent or manager of the premises herein named to ensure the Volunteers and Staff be trained in fire emergency procedures described in the Fire Safety Plan before they are given any responsibility for fire safety. (2.8 BC Fire Code)**

**The above information has been explained and is understood:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_