

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CPO Expecting Emergency Cold Weather Shelter Shortage

CPO asks the Springfield Community for shelters and volunteers amid expected shortage

SPRINGFIELD, Mo., (5/2/2024) – It may be the dog days of summer, but Community Partnership of the Ozarks' (CPO) Crisis Cold Weather Shelter team is already planning for winter after a shortage of emergency weather shelters may leave people outside in deadly cold temperatures. The Crisis Cold Weather Shelter program is a community initiative started by the Ozark Alliance to End Homelessness and facilitated by CPO. It saves lives and helps meet a critical need in our community by providing a warm place to sleep during extreme winter temperatures.

“Last season, we had to turn away people on two different shelter nights because there weren’t enough beds,” said CPO Continuum of Care Coordinator, Emily Fessler. “Since then, we have lost 60 additional beds. That is a serious gap that we’re hoping to get ahead of now,” Fessler said.

This means asking the Springfield community for buildings that can be used as emergency weather shelters. These shelters operate from November 1 through March 31, at night, when temperatures drop below 32 degrees. During the 2023-2024 season, these shelters were open 52 nights with an average of 183 total people sheltered per night.

“Traditionally it has been faith-based organizations or non-profits that open their buildings for this, but we are open to anything! There aren’t any specific requirements. As long as there is restroom access, our Crisis Cold Weather Shelter team can help work out the details,” Fessler said

Those interested in getting involved should fill out this [PARTNER INTEREST FORM](#) or contact Fessler at efessler@copozarks.org

Along with increasing the bed capacity comes a need for volunteers and buses or shuttles to help with transportation to and from shelters. Specifically, CCWS is looking for a large bus or shuttle to assist with transportation on Sundays and volunteers to help with transportation.

“Volunteers are critical to the opening and operation of these shelters. They simply would not operate without the caring hearts of our community,” said Fessler.

Volunteers can sign up by filling out this [VOLUNTEER INTEREST FORM](#). For more on the Crisis Cold Weather Shelter program and how you can help, go the [Crisis Cold Weather Shelters](#) section of the CPO website, CPOzarks.org

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ABOUT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP OF THE OZARKS: *The mission of Community Partnership of the Ozarks is to facilitate and promote the building of resilient children, healthy families, and strong neighborhoods and communities through collaboration, programming and resource development. For more information on the Partnership’s collaborative efforts and programs, visit www.cpozarks.org.*