



Montgomery County Code Blue Shelter Implementation Guide

What is Code Blue in Montgomery County?

In periods of extreme, life-threatening weather, defined as a wind-chill factor of 20°F or below, multiple county agencies and private health / social organizations will provide temporary shelter, food and clothing to those without adequate shelter. The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Public Health is responsible for recommending Code Blue emergencies to the County Commissioners based on monitoring of National Weather Service forecasts. Code Blue declarations will be issued for a specific duration, usually based on 24-hour increments, and will end as initially declared unless formally extended by the County Commissioners.

Some steps to Implementing a Code Blue Shelter:

- Establishing an accessible location for the shelter near public transportation
- If applicable, registration as a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit
- Developing a workforce of Paid Staff, Volunteers and/or Shelter Managers. One successful model is partnering with faith-based organizations and other volunteer networks.
- Establishing shelter operating timeframes. Will your shelter be open 24/7 during the winter or only during Code Blue declarations by the County?
- Municipal Zoning approval and Standards for Occupancy
- Applying for open government grants and/or donations
- Establishing relationships with surrounding social service agencies for additional supportive services
- Considering which population the shelter will serve? (Men, Women, Families, All)
- Establishing additional services to be offered such as meals, snacks, showers and Case Management
- Considering the capacity of shelter space. How many beds can the facility accommodate? 10-15 beds is recommended.

Montgomery County can provide support with:

- Free emergency cots, pillows and blankets
- Guides and referrals to community organizations
- Membership to the PA-504 Continuum of Care for access to grant applications and community connections
- Shelter operating procedures for service delivery
- Registration with the County's 2-1-1 Crisis Response System
- Code Blue and Case Management recommended Trainings

If your organization is interested in becoming a Code Blue Provider, please fill out the form by scanning the QR code below or applying at <https://www.montcopa.org/FormCenter/Health-and-Human-Services-30/Code-Blue-Emergency-Shelter-341>. If your organization needs assistance with how to identify space, volunteers, staff, transportation, or services, please contact Mark Boorse, Director of Program Development, at mboorse@accessservices.org.

