

2025-26 NOFA for Winter Warming Shelters
Questions & Answers
8/15/25

Q: In reading the RFP for Warming Shelter, the dates listed for operations are by November 15th and until April 30th. Are these dates concrete, or are we able to apply for dates of operation being October 1 through May 31 where the grant is active until June 15th?

A: This grant is only able to pay for occupancy for November 15, 2025 through April 30, 2026 as a maximum, although some shelters do close at the end of March. The grant is only open through June 15th to allow for final reporting.

Q: Can you clarify if warming shelters need to be open every night of the winter starting 11/15/25 to be eligible for this grant?

A: Ideally shelters will be available every night. If that is impossible, we would require an estimated number of nights the shelter would be open to be included in the application. Usually the criteria shelters use is when the temperature reaches a specific low point, so the estimate would be based on previous winters in the area. In allocating funding, we establish an average per night cost per individual served (based on the number of nights and number of people to be served each night) so we need to have an estimated number of nights based on temperature as we will only fund a shelter for open nights. The number should not be based on availability of the facility (for example – it cannot be open on weekends) because the intent is to ensure that everyone has safe shelter on the coldest nights of the winter. If applications exceed our available resources, we would certainly consider whether a shelter is open every night or only on certain nights of the year in ranking the applications.

Q: Is there a maximum award size?

A: No.

Q: Is there a per bed/person maximum amount of funding?

A: Yes – this amount is established by MaineHousing based upon applications and historical data. Because we attempt to base it on real costs, we do not establish a maximum prior to receiving applications.

Q: If there are operations that occur outside of the operating period, but are vital to the ability to open during the operation period, are they eligible for funding support?

A: If they are reasonable costs and fit within the per bed night maximum, we will consider them.

Q: Does MaineHousing prioritize projects that partner with area shelters to ensure shelter beds are filled and warming center beds stay open for emergencies?

A: If applications exceed our available resources, we would certainly consider this in ranking the applications.

Q: Assuming code capacity allows it, could a shelter increase its capacity if operating as a warming center?

A: Yes – for the specified period of time.

Q: Can transportation be included in the budget (e.g. if a location has access issues and we wanted to add a shuttle or expand an existing line)?

A: While we do not pay for vehicles, reasonable transportation costs will be considered as long as it is within the maximum per bed night cost.

Q: If a warming shelter has already operated in the same site previously, do we need to submit any additional evidence of site control?

A: No, but this does not negate the need for proof of municipal approval.

Q: Who in the municipality needs to write a letter of support?

A: It should be someone in the municipality with decision making authority. Depending on the size of the municipality it could be the Director of Health and Human Services, the Town or City Manager or the Mayor.

Q: Please clarify requirements for this funding opportunity around the following topics:

A:

1. Staffing Requirements

- While MaineHousing does not prescribe salary requirements or staff to volunteer ratios, there is an expectation that paid staff will be running the shelter and that there will be paid staff on the premises when guests are present. Shelters should not be run solely by volunteers.

2. Training Standards

- Because this is a short-term emergency response and not a permanent shelter program MaineHousing does not have specific staff training requirements. Part of the grant application requires a description of an applicant's experience working with people experiencing homelessness, and most experienced applicants will have their own training standards in place.

3. Use of Funds

- MaineHousing reviews all budgets for reasonableness within a per bed night maximum that does not allow for any major facility modification and includes a staffing budget.

4. Oversight and Accountability

- MaineHousing requires a letter of support from the municipality in which the shelter will be sited. MaineHousing does not require municipalities to oversee shelter operations.
- MaineHousing accepts feedback and complaints regarding funded shelters and investigates them with the goal of working with the grantee to address the complaint. MaineHousing does not carry out official site visits during the funded period.

5. Insurance and Liability

- While MaineHousing does not have specific insurance requirements for these short-term warming shelters, we do see an insurance line in most budgets where the warming shelter is housed in a property not owned and currently operated by the applicant.

6. Data Collection

- While reporting in HMIS is not required, it is a best practice and can be set up for warming shelters. Monthly secure reporting directly to MaineHousing is required on guests served.

7. **Lived Experience Inclusion**

- MaineHousing respects feedback from persons with lived experience of homelessness and has responded to complaints from those advocates with lived experience to address issues identified with specific warming shelters in the past and will continue to do so.