



Frequently Asked Questions:

What does 'temporary' mean?

Temporary winter shelters generally operate from November 1 through March 31. The goal is for the Welcome Inn shelter to open in late December or early January, depending on the number of volunteer staff available to safely operate the building. This is a temporary shelter to provide a place for people to go during the winter and will be open until March 31, 2020.

Who will be managing the shelter?

This shelter will be operated by the Welcome Inn. This is largely a volunteer-based group that was created to operate this shelter. The new group will be led by experienced staff who are in the process of hiring volunteers to help with day-to-day operations. Turning Points Collaborative Society, a service provider based out of Vernon, will also be supporting with mentoring and training for staff and volunteers.

Who will be staying at this shelter?

Only people who are experiencing homelessness would be eligible to stay at the temporary shelter. The intake process will prioritize Kelowna residents.

Do children or families stay here?

People would need to be over the age of 19. Youth or families who are in need would be connected with the appropriate community resources.

What hours will the temporary shelter operate?

The goal is for the shelter to be open 24/7, but depending on staff and/or volunteer availability, the shelter may initially open overnights only.

Where will people go during the day, if they can't stay inside?

The Metro Community Church warming centre is located behind the shelter and will be available for shelter guests during the daytime.

What security features will be in place?

The safety of residents, staff and the surrounding community is a priority. The following security measures will be in place:

- There will be at least two staff or volunteers on site during operating hours;
- Staff will have emergency walkie talkies;
- Entrance will be monitored by cameras and staff and/or volunteers;
- Outside amenity area will be monitored by staff and/or volunteers during operating hours;

If concerns or problems occur with specific individuals, the operators will work with the individual and the community on solutions.

Can anyone come to the shelter at any time of day or night for a bed? Or is there a set time for intake?

Intake hours are still being determined, however operations would be planned to avoid line ups outside of the building.

Could people staying at the shelter have guests?

No visitors would be allowed to the shelter, however special arrangements would be made to connect with family through outreach workers.

How will disruptive behaviour in the outdoor area be dealt with?

The Welcome Inn will have procedures regarding any disruptive behaviours in or out of the immediate shelter area. Disruptive behaviours would be addressed based on the individual circumstance of the shelter guest and the severity of the behaviour.

Is there storage for people?

There will be some storage space for personal belongings for guests staying at the shelter.

Are people allowed to use drugs inside the shelter?

BC Housing, Interior Health, and the Welcome Inn work from a Housing First principle. The goal is to provide stable shelter/housing, and then work with people to promote recovery and well-being. If we exclude people with substance use issues, they would remain on the street with deteriorating health. Harm reduction best practices, based on Interior Health's guidance, would be followed within the shelter in order to prevent overdoses. This means drug-use will be permitted on site however only in a designated area that would be monitored by staff and require safe-disposal of needles. Although we anticipate most drug-use will happen inside the shelter, the society would be sweeping the streets daily for garbage as a courtesy to neighbours.

How will this shelter benefit the community?

People are living on the streets, in parks, in cars and precariously housed in our community. These new temporary winter shelter beds would bring people in from the cold weather and provide a gateway to services and housing options. Without access to shelter and housing options, people will continue to live on the street with deteriorating health.

Who is funding the shelter?

BC Housing will pay for the lease, renovations and operations.

Who do I contact if I am interested in volunteering?

Welcome Inn has a signup page for people who are interested in volunteering, www.welcomeinn.org

We understand that it is important for you to be informed about the plan for 1265 Ellis Street. We welcome any questions you may have at communityrelations@bchousing.org.