



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council **DATE:** April 27, 2026

DEPARTMENT: Police Department

PREPARED BY: Eric Swift, Police Chief

PRESENTER: Eric Swift, Police Chief

AGENDA TITLE: Extreme Weather Shelter 25/26 Season Report

RECOMMENDATION

Receive report.

BACKGROUND

The Fort Bragg Police Department operates the City's Extreme Weather Shelter (EWS), which is an overflow shelter of the Hospitality House for unhoused individuals during extreme weather events.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This is the fourth winter the Fort Bragg Police Department Care Response Unit has operated the Extreme Weather Shelter (EWS). This was the third year we have received funding through Mendocino County and the State of California Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) grant.

The EWS was in operation from November 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026. The rules of EWS are the same as those of the Hospitality House – no fighting, no drugs, no alcohol, and you must be in your room by a certain time. Parameters to open the EWS are: more than 0.1 inch of precipitation is expected from 10:00 PM through 6:00 AM, or temperature is predicted to be below 40 degrees during those same hours.

Every day at noon of the EWS season, a Care Response Unit team member checks the National Weather Service (Eureka) forecast for the next 18 hours. If predicted conditions are expected to meet the aforementioned thresholds, Hospitality House is notified EWS will be open, at 12:00 pm daily. A CRU team member responds to Hospitality House during the daily check-in, and enrolls those not able to get a bedspace in the Hospitality House. This provides an opportunity for CRU team members to work with the unhoused population and begin to work on more permanent solutions. Also, room checks were conducted throughout the season to ensure clients were utilizing the program, as intended.

During 25/26 operational window of EWS, Fort Bragg experienced a typical winter with 10 days experiencing a low temperature of below 40 degrees and total rainfall of over 36 inches.

This resulted in the EWS being open 39 nights and housing 71 unique individuals. In total, 233 hotel rooms were issued to 71 people. With the decreased usage, only 2 calls for police service were generated at the hotel as a result of EWS.

This was a 53% decrease in nights open and a 64% decrease in total hotel rooms used as compared to the 24/25 season where the EWS being open 83 nights and housing 107 unique individuals. In total, 644 hotel rooms were issued to 107 people. Despite the increased usage, only 8 calls for police service were generated at the hotel as a result of EWS. This was a 8% increase in nights open and a 105% increase in total hotel rooms used as compared to the 23/24 season.

During the 2024–2025 winter season, Atmospheric River events (El Niño) significantly impacted the Fort Bragg area, bringing prolonged heavy rainfall, flooding risks, and colder, wetter conditions. These extreme weather conditions increased the immediate need for emergency shelter, particularly for unsheltered individuals at high risk of exposure.

In contrast, the 2025–2026 season did not experience comparable atmospheric river events. Weather conditions were relatively milder and less hazardous, resulting in reduced immediate risk to unsheltered populations, lower demand for emergency motel placements, and fewer overnight weather conditions meeting program criteria activation.

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATIONS

With the remaining funding from the 24/25 season, the Care Response Unit made a call to action to implement community volunteers to assist with processing intakes during weekend operations, with the goal of reducing the cost of staff time and reallocating funding towards motel voucher overhead. Following staffing, onboarding, and training, volunteers began operations in early January, and as the weather allowed. Out of a total of 24 days available over the weekend, EWS was open for a total of 6. Volunteers worked a total of 4 days with an estimated 2 hours to process intakes. In total, \$400.60 in costs that would have been used for staff time were able to be reallocated in support of extending remaining funds from the previous season to last until March.

The Care Response Unit continues to utilize available programs, such as Homeward Bound, to connect individuals with stable support systems. During this winter season, CRU re-engaged with an individual previously contacted for illegal camping and substance use-related concerns from the 2024-2025 EWS season. Over the past year, the individual participated in inpatient treatment but experienced a relapse and returned to the Fort Bragg community.

CRU maintained contact, following his return, and provided ongoing support to assist the individual in re-engaging with recovery services. Through coordination with partner agencies, including Mendocino County Social Services, Building Bridges, and Ukiah Recovery Center, CRU facilitated the reactivation of the individual's medical insurance to access detox services. Additionally, CRU utilized the Building Bridges Homeward Bound program to arrange transportation and successfully reconnected the individual with their out-of-state sober living environment within close proximity of their family.

FISCAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

All expenses are paid for by the HHAP grant administered by Mendocino County.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Not applicable.

STRATEGIC PLAN CONSISTENCY

Goal

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

COUNCIL REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Receive report.

ALTERNATIVES:

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

NOTIFICATION:

None Applicable