



# **KCRHA Severe Weather: Emergency Response Policy 2024**

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The King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) maintains a regional emergency response for people experiencing homelessness; recommends short-term emergency shelter activation; and leads contract-holder engagement and coordination for emergency planning and preparations for the King County sub-regions, including the City of Seattle.

This Severe Weather: Emergency Response Policy Manual describes the agency's policies for expanding emergency resources to people experiencing homelessness during emergency conditions, to be implemented by KCRHA in cooperation with King County, City of Seattle, community nonprofit agencies, local faith organizations, and other community partners and liaisons.

The goal of this document is to provide standards for activation for Severe Weather and provide information on how KCRHA works collaboratively with participating community partners to open and operate short-term emergency shelters in the event of hazardous environmental conditions and/or public health crises.

The policies described in this document are implemented when certain environmental and/or public health conditions are met related to very extreme temperatures, poor air quality or other public health and safety criteria. The degree of plan implementation and interagency coordination needed is contingent on the severity of the emergency, described in three distinct phases. Each phase indicates the type of response needed based upon the severity and length of emergency conditions and the needs of homeless individuals and families to keep them safe.

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## Section I: System Activation Criteria

The KCRHA aims to proactively address extreme weather conditions with activation responses that keep people experiencing homelessness safe. KCRHA will partner with regional city offices of emergency management and King County government to monitor conditions to determine the most effective response based on the most up-to-date information. KCRHA is prepared to shift activation responses when conditions change, and as resources are available. The KCRHA system activation includes policy, protocols, and procedures to produce the most effective response to austere conditions.

Activation ranges from access to life-sustaining supplies and can include opening of indoor spaces that meet Public Health Seattle-King County (PHSKC) guidelines for social distancing, air quality and infectious diseases, including COVID-19 protocols. Other activation procedures include community notification, transportation, and site operations.

The criteria outlined in this document are based on modeling of King County weather conditions from 2018 through 2021. This modeling reflects the use of Apparent Temperature, which is an index that accounts for variable climate factors like humidity, windchill, precipitation and visibility as a more accurate predictor for dangerous conditions. Additionally, King County experiences significant weather variations between subregions, which will require flexible severe weather activation; therefore, local climate conditions should be considered by sub-regions.

### 1.1 Extreme Weather Activation

King County frequently experiences sustained cold and wet weather during winter months, typically November through March. These months are particularly dangerous for people experiencing homelessness, who often spend prolonged periods of time outside and unprotected from the elements. Exposure to these weather conditions, often with inadequate clothing and supplies, significantly increases the risks of cold-weather related morbidity and mortality. These risks are further increased by a disproportionate burden of underlying medical and mental health diagnoses, which can also markedly increase susceptibility to the dangers of unabated cold and wet weather exposure.

Not only can extreme cold-weather events lead to poor health outcomes; there is a cumulative risk associated with prolonged exposure to even moderately cold temperatures without appropriate supportive measures. It is vital to formulate activation policies with the intent to mitigate risks for hypothermia and cold-related negative health outcomes throughout the duration of the winter season, including temperatures that may not traditionally trigger a larger community-wide emergency response.



### 1.1.1 Cold Weather Activation

Given the preceding considerations, the following are the three general tiers for severe weather activation in order of increasing risk to human life. We work with our partners at the National Weather Service (NWS) and the King County Office of Emergency Management (KCOEM) to monitor weather forecasts for the 39 cities and municipalities in King County. Activation information will be focused on the cities affected by the forecast, and we endeavor to reach out to providers or partners in the specific areas when applicable. For Seattle and North King County, there exist current City owned or contracted partner sites at the Seattle Center, Seattle City Hall (Red Room), Salvation Army SoDo, St. Dunstan’s Church Shoreline (North King), and some Seattle Parks and Recreation Community Centers as needed.

TIER 1 - Increased Outreach and Survival Supplies Distribution	
Activation threshold is met when one or more of these conditions is present based on forecasts for each of the 39 King County urban areas. Activations outside of Seattle may differ	*Daily high temperatures predicted at 45°F or below for 3 days  Apparent Temperature conditions, coupled with low temperatures, predict increased life-threatening conditions
Activation	
Before 12/31/24: KCRHA shifts to ready posture. Increased outreach through contracted providers and other formal and informal community groups to vulnerable unsheltered people	After 12/31/24: KCRHA shifts to ready posture. Preparing for and watching for potential Tier 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KCRHA Programs communication through email list-serv, scheduled and ad hoc meetings</li> <li>- Geographic prioritization based on forecasted weather conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seattle: check in with Unified Care Team about increased outreach by providers</li> <li>- North King County: check in with contracted providers for increased outreach</li> <li>- Other Areas: Contact Severe Weather Responders and Outreach to note of anticipated Tier 2 or 3 activation</li> </ul>



**Cold Weather**

<b>Tier 2 - Opening of Short-Term Emergency Shelters</b>		
Activation threshold is met when one or more of these conditions is present based on forecasts for each of the 39 King County urban areas		
Daily high temperatures predicted at 40° F or below for 3 days	Daily low temperatures predicted at 35° F or below for 3 days	Snow or rain accumulation greater than 2 inches in a 24-hr. period
<b>Activation</b>		
Tier 1 actions plus:	Open KCRHA-funded temporary emergency shelters (also known as severe weather shelters), contracted to engage at Tier 2; seek expansions to existing emergency shelter programs including 24/7 shelters and night- by-night shelters	Update communications materials including but not limited to KCRHA’s Severe Weather webpage, and flyers, to include up-to-date information



**Cold Weather**

<b>Tier 3 – Expanded Emergency Operations</b>		
Activation threshold is met when one or more of these conditions is present for a 24-hour period or longer		
Daily high temperatures predicted at 35°F or below	Daily low temperatures predicted at 30°F or below	Snow/rain accumulation greater than 4 inches
<b>Activation</b>		
All actions in Tier 1 and Tier 2 actions plus:	Coordination with transit and transportation partners to shelter sites (for example, medically fragile or disabled individuals)	Open emergency daytime and overnight warming centers and day centers, including libraries
Where applicable: Coordinate with cities to open local city halls and other City-owned properties for warming centers and/or 24/7 emergency shelters		



**Cold Weather**

Historical Tier 1 Activation	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
# of days that reached the threshold	7	25	2	25	*	*

Historical Tier 2 Activation	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
# of days that reached the criteria	32	51	44	8	22	11

Historical Tier 3 Activation	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
# of days that reached the criteria	15	31	12	16	10	16



### 1.1.2 Extreme Heat

Category	Level	Meaning
Green	0	No Elevated Risk
Yellow	1	Low Risk for those extremely sensitive to heat, especially those without effective cooling and/or adequate hydration
Orange	2	Moderate Risk for those who are sensitive to heat, especially those without effective cooling and/or adequate hydration
Red	3	High Risk for much of the population, especially those who are heat sensitive and those without effective cooling and/or adequate hydration
Magenta	4	Very High Risk for entire population due to long duration heat, with little to no relief overnight

While known for moderate, wet weather, King County also experiences periods of dangerously high heat that can cause significant negative health consequences, including death. Public Health – Seattle & King County recommends the activation of overnight and daytime cooling centers when the National Weather Service issues a Heat Advisory. In accordance with our other governmental partners, KCRHA follows the HeatRisk. The categories are not only based on afternoon heat, but also on how the overnight temperature mitigates or augments the effects of daytime heat.

When areas of King County enter these categories, KCRHA responds with the following:

<b>TIER 1 – Outreach and Preparations</b>	
National Weather Service Heat Risk indicates to “YELLOW” in a sub-region within King County	
<b>Activation</b>	
Dissemination of key public health safety messaging and risk communications to at-risk populations.	Outreach to service providers to evaluate supply needs to support warehouse preparations for potential entrance into tier 2 or tier 3.





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**Extreme Heat**
**TIER 2 – Targeted Resourcing**

National Weather Service HeatRisk indicates to “ORANGE” in a sub-region within King County  
Includes the above actions in addition to the following conditions:

**Activation**

If ORANGE forecast for only 24 hours for a locality:

Partner and support water distribution and other cooling supplies for at-risk communities and populations

If ORANGE forecast lasts more than 24 hours, then take all actions below:

- Partner with jurisdictions to selectively activate daytime cooling centers for unsheltered individuals in heat islands/high usage areas
- Contact providers to test their HVAC and ice making systems
- Update communications materials including but not limited to KCRHA’s Severe Weather webpage, and flyers, to include up-to-date information
- Scale up other activities required to meet recommendations of Tier 3



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**Extreme Heat**

<b>TIER 3 - Daytime Cooling</b>	
HeatRisk indicates to “RED” and/or “MAGENTA” in a sub-region within King County Includes the above actions in addition to the following conditions:	
<b>Activation</b>	
<p>For forecast RED/MAGENTA lasting only 24 hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeted outreach efforts to reach at-risk populations using 1.6-mile resolution HeatRisk with cooling center communications, cooling supplies and water distribution</li> </ul>	<p>For forecast RED/MAGENTA lasting more than 24 hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeted HeatRisk zone activation of daytime cooling centers for unsheltered individuals;</li> <li>- Stand up cooling tents with misting fans in high unsheltered population corridors, provide hydration supplies;</li> <li>- Outreach: Conduct wellness checks on elders and people living with disabilities to ensure access to air conditioning or cooling centers;</li> <li>- Coordinate transit access to take people to cooling sites;</li> </ul> <p>Partner with jurisdictions to explore expanding hours of operation for cooling centers for unsheltered individuals to accommodate overnight use.</p>

*Historical rates of activation for these thresholds are not available given that the NWS HeatRisk tool was only recently developed and implemented in the 2023/24 season.*



### 1.1.3 Poor Air Quality & Wildfire Smoke Activation

Increased wildfires in the Pacific Northwest have caused periods of unhealthy air quality. Exposure to these conditions can cause immediate and long-term negative health consequences. Due to the continued exposure that our unsheltered population face during incidents of poor air quality and this population often has co-occurring conditions, the RHA will begin activation of cleaner air sites when the Air Quality Index (AQI) is Orange - Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (Index Value of 101–150). Activation at this level is coordinated mask distribution with Public Health Seattle King County and coordination with outreach providers.

Further activation will occur when AQI escalates to Red - Unhealthy for All Groups. At this level, KCRHA will work with contracted providers to activate smoke shelters. KCRHA will also follow the wildfire smoke guidelines set in place by PHSKC.

Given that unhealthy air quality does not have traditional spikes or trends across the day such as with heat, this type of activation requires 24/7 options for people living unsheltered. Cleaner air sites activated by KCRHA will follow guidelines set by PHSKC. KCRHA will work with community groups to connect vulnerable unsheltered populations to cleaner air sites open to the public.



## Section II: Funding Policies

To ensure the system of homeless services can meet the increased need for immediate sheltering when there are dangerous weather conditions, KCRHA has several funding policies to support resourcing to providers. The approved Five-Year Plan prioritizes several activities, including moving to a seasonal weather shelter model, further regionalization, and expansion support to areas outside of Seattle and take over contracting for all jurisdictions. The funding policies to support these transitions are as follows:

### 2.1 Eligibility

While an entire region may be impacted by severe weather in some form, there are a select portfolio of providers/programs who experience an increase in service population when severe weather hits. Programs that directly interface with people coming from unsheltered homelessness such as day centers, outreach workers, and emergency shelters with drop-in will be the eligible pool for severe weather funding opportunities. The KCRHA recognizes that the competitive procurement process may present a barrier for some service providers that must simultaneously demonstrate organizational capacity and program qualifications. To support organizations with the preparation and organization of their registration documents, we have outlined a list of documents that are required to be minimally eligible to contract with KCRHA. This list is in Appendix A towards the end of this document, or online at the Funding Opportunities page under the “Minimum Eligibility Requirements” drop-down menu.

### 2.2 Funding for Severe Weather Response

In the annual KCRHA budget, KCRHA will dedicate a portion of the budget to severe weather services. This amount will be determined based on funding availability and regional utilization data that the KCRHA Weather Emergency Response Crew collects throughout severe weather events, and historical data documenting activation trends. The following are areas of funding KCRHA will offer:

#### 2.2.1 Funding the Stand-up of Severe Weather Overnight and Daytime Accommodations

Per KCRHA’s Master Services Agreement with the City of Seattle and the North King County Interlocal Agreement, KCRHA must oversee and administer a contract with a service provider to ensure severe weather shelter for City of Seattle and North King County residents, respectively. The procurement of these services is done in accordance with KCRHA’s procurement policy. North King County cities in the ILA include Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, Bothell, Woodinville. To ensure geographic coverage and service for all King County, KCRHA will aim to allocate severe weather funding to be distributed in partnership with other public funders regionally.



### 2.2.2 Funding Severe Weather Allowances in Existing Contracts

This area of expenditure is identified as a Year 1-2 Key Action in the Five-Year Plan: “Incorporate allowances for severe weather shelter response into existing contracts, to support a standardized severe weather response.” Regionally, many emergency shelters expand their capacity to accommodate additional people seeking refuge from the elements. These expansions make additional beds available to serve people during cold and snowy weather.

KCRHA works with eligible providers to build in spending allowances for severe weather into existing contracts. In future contract re-procurements, all emergency services contracts (day centers, emergency shelter, outreach) will include a clause for inclusion of an additional funding allowance to use for severe weather response activations in accordance with the tiers indicated in this policy.

### 2.2.3 Severe Weather Mitigation Supplies

KCRHA may distribute additional funds for severe weather supplies to Agencies that meet the eligibility criteria described in Section 2.1. Agencies that receive additional funds under this provision may utilize funds for heat mitigation supplies; including, but not limited to water, fans, ice machines, sunscreen, etcetera and cold weather supplies like blankets, hand warmers, hats, socks and mattresses.

### 2.2.4 Eligible Expenses

These guidelines are for organizations in King County requesting funding for Severe Weather supplies or services. Agencies seeking resources must meet the following conditions:

- Hold a current contract with KCRHA
- Provide shelter, day center or outreach services
- Serve residents within King County jurisdiction

The maximum amount that may be requested is \$9,999.00 annually. Larger amounts may be availed via an RFQ or RFP process. Due to limited funds, only one request per agency will be accepted.



## Eligible costs

- A. Staffing costs for shelter operations
  - a. Administrative costs associated with program management.
  - b. Frontline personnel responsible for providing direct assistance and support to shelter guests.
  - c. Support Staff: Additional personnel to assist with various tasks such as meal preparation, distribution of supplies, cleaning and maintenance of shelter facilities.
- B. Supplies and Equipment include protective clothing (gloves, hats/mittens, socks, cooling towels, etc); electrolytes, water, refillable water bottles, blankets, sleeping bags, hand and feet warmers, hygiene kits, sunscreen; masks, air filters, air purifiers, air conditioners, fans, misting fans, heaters and associated control systems, pet restraint equipment (crates)
- C. Hygiene supplies and equipment
- D. Supportive Services associated with the severe weather event include:
  - a. Food and food service during the severe weather event (including pet food)
  - b. Case management, i.e. the collaborative process to assess, plan, implement, coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the options and services required to meet the client's health and human service needs. It often includes an active phase of outreach and engagement typified by a non-threatening approach, persistent contact over time, and a patient offer of a flexible array of services, including help with basic survival needs (More on [Case management at HUD Exchange](#))
  - c. Employment assistance
  - d. Housing search and counseling services
  - e. Outpatient health services (mobile medical)
  - f. Outreach services
  - g. Transportation to, between, and at the close of the site
- E. Bed Rates: For expanded capacity, each provider will be eligible for \$22 per extra bed per night provided within an existing and already operational shelter.

## Ineligible Costs

- A. Any expenses that are not directly related to the provision of shelter services during extreme weather events or that do not align with the funding guidelines and objectives.
- B. Outreach staff overtime labor costs



## Section III: Staffing Policies

### 3.1 Severe Weather Leads

KCRHA has one Severe Weather Response Lead whose responsibilities are:

- On-call to monitor operations 24/7 for extreme weather events.
- To recommend activation actions.
- Leads the KCRHA Weather Emergency Response Crew (WERC) which is activated in a Severe Weather Response.
- To carry out the activities outlined in Severe Weather Operations Manual for cold, heat and smoke.
- To keep the Severe Weather Policy and Operations Manual up to date to support ongoing quality improvement in Severe Weather response.
- To provide end-of-event reports to leadership.
- To monitor the email account [severeweather@kcrha.org](mailto:severeweather@kcrha.org).

### 3.2 Weather Emergency Response Crew (WERC)

WERC is made up of representatives from:

- The Emergency Services Team
- The Planning Team
- The Communications Team

When activated, members from each team play a role in severe weather response as outlined in the Severe Weather Operations Manual.







## Appendix A: KCRHA Minimum Eligibility Requirements

### KING COUNTY REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS AUTHORITY (KCRHA) MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

The KCRHA recognizes that the competitive procurement process may present a barrier for some service providers that must simultaneously demonstrate organizational capacity and program qualifications. To support organizations with the preparation and organization of their registration documents, KCRHA has outlined a list of documents that are required to be minimally eligible to contract with KCRHA.

The checklist below lists the documents you must submit before receiving funding.

MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION	COMPLETE
Applicant must be incorporated as a <a href="#">Washington State, private non-profit corporation</a> . <b>Note:</b> Applicant must be granted 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.	Certificate of Incorporation	<input type="checkbox"/>
	KCRHA confirms the status via the <a href="#">IRS website</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OR</b> a <a href="#">Federally</a> or <a href="#">Washington State-recognized</a> Indian tribe.	Federal or State Registry listing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>OR</b> a public corporation or other legal entity established per <a href="#">R.C.W. 35.21.660</a> or <a href="#">35.32.730</a> (public corporation, commission, or authority).	Authorizing documents such as an interlocal agreement, legislative act, or ruling, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>AND</b>		
Applicant must be in good standing 12 months before and on the date of application for pre-certification.	<a href="#">Certificate of Existence</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applicant must have a Federal Tax Id number / employer identification number (EIN)	EIN Registration Confirmation from the IRS.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applicant must have <a href="#">Washington State Business License</a> (UBI#) and <a href="#">Seattle Business License</a> (as applicable), and pay taxes as required by the laws of those jurisdictions.	Copy of Business License(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Applicant must not be presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from competing for funding opportunities by any Federal, State, or local department or agency.	<a href="#">KCRHA Certification of Non-debarment</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applicant must have an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration on Sam.gov and an active Unique Entity ID number (UEI).	<a href="#">Proof of active SAM registration and UEI number.</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix B: King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) Certification of Non-Debarment and Suspension

### A. Definitions.

The terms covered transaction, debarred, suspended, ineligible, primary or lower-tier covered transaction, Contractor, person, primary covered transaction, principal, proposal, and voluntarily excluded, as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of the rules implementing Executive Order 12549, as codified in 48 CFR Part 9 Subpart 9.4

### B. Instructions.

This certification or an attached explanation (as applicable) will be considered in connection with the KCRHA's determination of whether to contract with an Organization.

If the Organization is unable to certify any of the statements in this certification, you should attach an explanation.

An Organization's inability to provide the certification required below will not necessarily result in the denial of your application. However, failure to furnish a certification or an explanation will disqualify Organization from participation in current funding opportunities.

### C. Certifications.

1. Organization hereby certifies that to the best of its knowledge and belief that Organization and its principals:
  - a. Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal, State, or local debarment or agency;



- b. Have not within three years preceding this application, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification, or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
    - c. Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State, or local) with the commission of any of the offenses listed in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification; and
    - d. Have not within three years preceding this application had one or more public transactions (Federal, State, or local) terminated for cause or default.\
  2. Organization hereby acknowledges this certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance is placed when the KCRHA determines whether to contract with the Organization. If it is later determined that the Organization knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the KCRHA (including but not limited to suspension and/or debarment), the KCRHA may terminate any existing contract or transaction for cause of default.
  3. Organization hereby agrees to provide immediate written notice to the KCRHA if at any time the Organization learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
  4. Organization agrees that by submitting this certification, Organization will not knowingly enter into any covered transaction with a person or entity who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation, using fund awards received from the KCRHA, unless previously authorized by the KCRHA.O
  5. Organization may rely upon a certification of non-debarment and suspension provided by a person or entity unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. Organization may decide the method and frequency it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each principle may but is not required to check the Non- procurement List.
  6. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require the establishment of a system of records to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of Organization or its principal is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
  7. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation, in addition to



other remedies available to the KCRHA (including but not limited suspension and/or debarment), the KCRHA may terminate the transaction for cause of default.

Acknowledgment. By signing and submitting this certification, the Organization certifies, agrees to, and acknowledges the provisions as stated above.

Organization Name	Date
Signature of Authorized Certifying Official	Title

END OF DOCUMENT

