



Standard Operating Procedures for
Emergency Shelters During Hypothermia
Season with
COVID-19 Pandemic Preparations

Hypothermia Shelter Program Background

Arlington county is committed to assisting individual adult women and men who are experiencing homelessness during the cold winter/ hypothermia (Hypo) season. The County anticipates the 2020-2021 Hypothermia season will open from **November 9, 2020 through March 31, 2021**. The central mission of the hypothermia program is to provide safe, secure temporary housing and support to address an immediate crisis for homeless adults who would otherwise be living in conditions not meant for human habitation during life-threatening temperatures. Arlington's hypothermia prevention and response programs provide emergency shelter, meals and crisis intervention during the coldest months of the year. The program provides shelter, two hot meals (breakfast and dinner) and a bagged lunch. Arlington also provides access to case management and medical treatment as well as mental health and substance abuse services.

Due to the current community spread of COVID-19, Arlington County has modified its operations and physical infrastructure to safely accommodate shelter guests during the pandemic and throughout the hypothermia season.

During hypothermia season, the Homeless Services Center (HSC) and Residential Program Center (RPC) shelters shall accept all individuals experiencing homelessness regardless of whether they are Arlington residents. **Once the immediate hypothermia need has resolved, that is the weather is no longer or "feels like" below 32-degree Fahrenheit, all non-Arlington County residents must be connected to their jurisdiction of origin and exit Arlington shelters after 96 hours of an approved entry placement.** During their stay at the HSC and RPC, shelter guests will be provided similar services as those provided to participants of the Day Program*. Arlington's goal is to end homelessness. To that end, all guests participating in the hypothermia program shall be encouraged by shelter staff to transition to the year-round homeless services program.

As the need arises, the RPC shelter shall be responsible for accepting the overflow of up to 6 hypothermia guests from the HSC shelter. The HSC shall be responsible for overflow transportation from the HSC to the RPC shelter.

Staffing: **HSC-Hypo** must provide at least 3 dedicated staff to hypothermia oversight. **RPC-Hypo** overflow must provide at least 1 dedicated staff to hypothermia oversight. Routine security walk-throughs are required for both shelters.

Below are the procedures that all shelter staff must comply with for all hypothermia guests in Arlington's shelters. Please do not hesitate to contact Arlington County's Continuum of Care Services Coordinator at DHSSheltercontracts@arlingtonva.us. If you have any questions regarding these standard operating procedures.

Program Entry

Arlington County's Hypothermia program serves single adults on a first-come first-serve basis and Arlington County residents are prioritized for hypothermia placement and year-round shelter. All individuals seeking placement are initiated at the HSC-Hypo program regardless of their length of stay must undergo the admission process. Overflow entry procedures for RPC will follow the outlines as described for the HSC-Hypo program. All entry and exits by clients will be through the main shelter entrance to control visitor flow.

That includes/consists of:

1. **HSC-Hypo** program will make use of 2020-A 14th Street North 7th floor space for approximately 35 single adults. This includes (18 males and 17 females). Please refer to below attached floor plan.
 - a. **RPC-Hypo** program will make use of 1554 Columbia Pike for approximately 6 single adults.
2. Points of entry and exits: All **HSC and HSC-Hypo** program guests will make use of main 2020-A building entry point. **HSC-Hypo** program guests must be escorted to the 7th floor designated hypothermia space.
 - a. **RPC-Hypo** program guests will make use of the main building entrance as an entry and exit access point.
 - b. All visitors flow must be monitored.
 - c. All guests and staff utilizing shelter elevators should ensure appropriate social distancing of no more than 2 per person at any given time.
3. Upon entering shelter for hypothermia programs, all guests shall:
 - a. Have temperature checks and documented logs of all incoming guests maintained daily.
 - b. Be searched, as well as their personal belongings including but not limited to luggage, bags, purses, satchels, fanny packs, briefcases, etc... The following protocol should be followed for searches:
 - i. At least two staff members must be present for all searches and at least one or both must be female if the guest is a female.
 - ii. All pockets should be emptied and turned inside out upon entry into shelter, socks/ankles and waistband should be shown to monitor
 - iii. All consideration for the guest's dignity will be made.
 - iv. If the contraband is of an illegal nature, the Arlington Police will be notified, and the contraband will be turned over to them
 - v. If a guest has contraband, the guest may be asked to leave the shelter or otherwise be subjected to disciplinary action.
4. No one shall be admitted if he/she possess weapons, alcohol or illegal drugs, or other prohibited items. Shelter staff must notify the Arlington County Police through their non-emergency number 703-558-2222 whenever an individual is denied placement in the shelter because of a weapon possession;
5. If the individual is permitted to remain in the shelter, all belongings will be placed into a Bedbug treatment bag for 2 hours;
6. Staff must check the guest's name through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS);
7. Staff must update the bed list in HMIS within 8 hours of guests' entry and exit so that bed

- lists remain current in real-time;
8. Staff must complete a HUD assessment touchpoint in HMIS of the guest;
 9. Staff must check the individual's name on the national registry of sexual offenders;
 10. All hypothermia guests shall be strongly encouraged to transition to the year-around shelter program (discussed below); and,
 11. All guests must agree to fully comply with Arlington County's and the shelter's expectations for the hypothermia program.

Managing the Overflow of Hypothermia Guests from the HSC to the RPC

Whenever the HSC-Hypo program has reached the capacity of 35 hypothermia guests, the HSC staff must arrange with RPC staff to receive up to 6 hypothermia overflow guests. The HSC shall be responsible for transportation to and from the HSC to the RPC shelter for all hypothermia overflow guests. If all hypothermia shelter beds are occupied in Arlington County, HSC staff will coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to find temporary alternative shelter for guests. Any Arlington County resident will be returned to Arlington County once space becomes available.

Inclement Weather Events

Weather events that post an extreme risk to the safety of those sleeping outdoors may occur during times when all hypothermia beds are occupied, and year-round beds are not. In those circumstances, DHS, HSC, and RPC staff will:

1. Work to ensure that Arlingtonians in hypothermia beds will be placed in year-round beds at each facility to free up hypothermia spaces prior to the weather event;
2. Coordinate with each other to determine the transfer of guests (reference section above for process) prior to the weather event;
3. If both facilities are at maximum capacity for year-round, hypothermia and overflow, HSC and/or RPC will notify DHS.

DHS will determine if the weather events requires coordination with the Arlington County Sheriff's Office for temporary use of the Arlington County Detention Center (for males only). The Continuum of Care Services Coordinator or DHS-designee will be the person to coordinate these efforts. DHS will inform HSC and RPC staff of any authorization for use and coordinate logistics.

Justice-involved Adults

During hypothermia season, Arlington County will commit to serving a maximum of 3 justice-involved adults nightly who are experiencing homelessness who may not be residents but are committed to probation or parole in Arlington. Due to the close proximity of a licensed childcare facility to the Homeless Service Center (HSC), **sex offenders are not permitted at the HSC at all.** Both the HSC and Residential Program Center (RPC) are responsible for conducting real-time intake screenings for sex offenders across all project types. Any offenders seeking services at the HSC must be immediately directed to the County's Clinical Coordination Unit (CCP) for additional screening, assessment and possible placement. **RPC is only permitted to accommodate a maximum of 4 sex offenders at a time.** Probation and Parole District 10 or Arlington Community Corrections must seek approval from the Arlington County Department of Human Services before any justice-involved individuals are placed in the HSC-Hypo program.

Arlington County staff will notify HSC staff in writing with the name of the justice-involved adults who will be staying in the hypothermia program.

Schedule

All hypothermia guests must follow the shelter's rules and schedule. The daily schedule for hypothermia guests is as follows:

- *Wake-up time:* Weekdays-6:00am; Weekend-7:00am
- *Breakfast:* 6:30am-7:30 am
- *Departure time:* 9am daily - OR -
 - Day Programming: 9am -4pm daily*
- *Evening Hypothermia return:* Weekdays-4pm-6:00am; Weekend-4pm-7:00am

Meals may vary between catered bagged meals or onsite prepared meals. All mealtimes must be staggered, and proper social distancing must be sustained.

*Guests in the HSC and RPC-Hypo program have the option to remain in shelter during the day if they participate in the Day Program with appropriate social distancing procedures from 9am-4pm. **HSC- Hypo** day programming will take place in designated 2nd and 7th floor open spaces where beds and floor cots are to be removed to accommodate the placement of limited tables and chairs for shelter services.

Shelter Cleaning Procedures during Covid-19 Pandemic

Shelter providers must always ensure cleaning and the appropriate sanitary conditions of Arlington County shelters, this includes the outlined terms and conditions per the County's shelter agreements.

Additionally, shelters should adhere to CDC guidelines for cleaning procedures referenced [here](#)

Access to Year-Round Shelter

Guests are strongly encouraged to transition to available year-round shelter beds either at the HSC or RPC. To transition to a year-round shelter bed, guests must go to the Arlington County Department of Human Services- Community Assistance Bureau to complete an intake via the Centralized Access System (CAS). Upon completion of their intake, guests will receive a referral to either the HSC or RPC, depending on availability. Guests are required to accept the placement options to HSC or RPC. No wait list will be maintained for any shelter as the same services are offered at both the HSC ad RPC.

Hypothermia Procedures to Transition Clients to Year-round Shelter Placement

Throughout the hypothermia season, shelter staff will transition HSC-Hypo guests and RPC overflow guests (when applicable) to year-round emergency shelter beds. Hypothermia guests will complete intake over the phone with Arlington County Department of Human Services (DHS) before transitioning to a year-round bed if they have not already done so within the previous 30 days.

Staff will:

- Prior to being moved from hypothermia to shelter, the guest will receive a letter explaining the transition process, explained below.
- Contact the Clinical Coordination Program Manager at DHS by phone and/or email to provide notice that a current hypothermia guest will be completing an intake.
 - If a guest has been out of shelter and unconnected to homeless services for more than 30 days, they must go to DHS to complete intake again they must go to DHS to complete intake again.
 - If a guest has been moved to shelter on temporary basis and is required to go to DHS, the staff can contact the Clinical Coordination Program Manager to confirm the guest has completed intake at DHS. Case Management can begin once this has been confirmed.
- The Clinical Coordination Program Manager shall be informed via email the same day whenever a hypothermia guest declines a year-round shelter placement.

Transition Process

Prior to the end of hypothermia season, it may be necessary to transition a high volume of guests from hypothermia shelter to year-round shelter. The following process should be observed:

- Shelter staff will email the Arlington County Clinical Coordination Program Manager and confirm that the hypothermia guest is an Arlington resident.
- The HSC Senior Shelter Director will arrange various call times with the Clinical Coordination Program manager to have screening and intakes, a maximum of 5 hypothermia guests per day, completed over the phone.
- Each shelter will send the vacancy list to the Clinical Coordination Program Manager no later than 10 am Monday-Friday.

New HSC-Hypothermia 7th floor plan

