



Office of
**Housing
Stability**

KEEPING OUR NEIGHBORS SAFE WHEN THE TEMPERATURES DROP.



Temporary overnight warming centers provide safe, warm shelter during the most dangerous winter weather events in Knox County. Hosted by local congregations and community partners, warming centers help ensure that no one has to face life-threatening cold temperatures alone.



Warming centers activate when **overnight temperatures are forecasted to reach 25°F or below**, volunteer capacity allowing during December – February.

THE WINTER SHELTER SYSTEM

Warming centers complement the winter shelter system which includes year-round emergency shelter, seasonal overnight shelter, and temporary overnight warming centers.

Each part of the system serves a different role, allowing the community to respond flexibly and sustainably throughout the winter season.

AVAILABLE EVERY NIGHT



EMERGENCY SHELTER

- Knox Area Rescue Ministries
- Salvation Army



WINTER SEASON (DECEMBER – FEBRUARY)



SEASONAL SHELTER

- ReLAUNCH



ACTIVATED DURING EXTREME COLD



TEMPORARY OVERNIGHT WARMING CENTERS

- Church Street United Methodist Church
- Cokesbury Church
- Eternal Life Harvest Center



HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE SHELTERED DURING SEVERE WEATHER?

During recent severe weather periods, approximately **470–760 individuals per night** were sheltered across the Knoxville-Knox County system, including emergency shelter, seasonal shelter and warming centers.



HIGHEST DOCUMENTED NIGHTLY TOTAL: **757 individuals sheltered**

(Data period: December 14, 2025 – January 26, 2026)

During recent severe weather activations, community partners successfully coordinated sufficient overnight capacity so individuals were not turned away due to warming-center space limitations.

LAST WINTER'S IMPACT



17,731

total bed nights provided through emergency shelter, seasonal shelter, and warming centers



6,533

bed nights provided through seasonal shelter and warming centers



No one

seeking shelter was turned away.

HOW YOUR CONGREGATION CAN HELP

Whether your church is interested in hosting a warming center or supporting an existing site, there are many meaningful ways to serve.



HOST A WARMING CENTER

- Overnight hospitality
- Volunteer coordination
- A warm, safe place for guests



SUPPORT AN EXISTING SITE

- Meals
- Volunteers
- Transportation
- Donations
- Prayer and encouragement



Together,
NO ONE FACES LIFE-THREATENING COLD ALONE.



LEARN MORE

Visit knoxtnhousing.org to access:

- ✓ Congregation Guide
- ✓ FAQs
- ✓ Volunteer Training
- ✓ Planning Resources
- ✓ Recruitment Video



Questions? Let's start a conversation.
Katie McIlwain | Senior Manager of Strategic Partnerships
katie.mcilwain@knoxtnhousing.org

