



South Kitsap Emergency Housing Project The Pacific Building Homeless Co-Shelter 20 Frequently Asked Questions



Prepared by the Kitsap County Department of Human Services

BUILDING PURCHASE & FINANCE QUESTIONS

- 1. Where did the idea originate to purchase the Olympic Fitness building and property?**
Kitsap County's Homeless Crisis Response and Housing Plan includes an action step to increase the number of emergency housing beds available in different geographic areas of the county. County staff researched potential sites around the County however, finding a suitable facility for sale was challenging. In 2021, a local real estate agent alerted staff the Olympic Fitness building was for sale. After due diligence, Kitsap County entered into a purchase agreement with the property/facility owner. Escrow closed on April 14, 2021.
- 2. How are facility renovations and project expenses paid?**
Kitsap County has applied for federal, state, and local grant funding to increase the number of emergency housing beds in Kitsap County. Grant funds are used to finance the following projects:
1) purchase the property, 2) design interior building renovations and external site plans, 3) renovate the facility by adding "livability" improvements to foster a supportive group living environment, and 4) support the future operation of the co-shelter housing programs.
- 3. Who will own and maintain the building?**
Kitsap County will continue to own and provide maintenance for the Pacific Building.
- 4. What is the timeline for the shelter to open?**
The shelter will be fully operational and ready for occupancy by November 2, 2024. Kitsap County staff are working with a team of professionals (architects, engineers, site planners, permit officials, and a general contractor) to meet this critical project milestone.
- 5. What county permitting was required for this project?**
Kitsap County was required to submit permit applications for the following: Administrative Conditional Use Permit, Site Development Activity Permit, and a Commercial Tenant Improvement Permit. There are additional permits that will be issued for project utility upgrades, signage, site grading, and roadway/sidewalk construction.

PROGRAM QUESTIONS

- 6. What is the plan for the Pacific Building?**
The Pacific Building will provide emergency housing in a congregate co-shelter environment for a maximum of 75 guests, 20 companion animals, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. It will provide registered guests with meals, laundry, personal hygiene, and safe storage of their possessions. The building's pet care center will provide care and support for dogs, cats, bunnies and ferrets. Guests will work with staff to create an action plan that consists of engaging with wraparound services such as health care, financial stability, housing assistance, physical and mental health, substance recovery assistance, and job placement.

7. Who will manage/operate the human services programs?

Kitsap County will contract with Kitsap Rescue Mission to operate the facility and provide human services. Kitsap Rescue Mission has significant experience with caring for the most vulnerable members of the homeless population and has a history of providing quality services to the unhoused members of the community.

8. Who will be offered services in this shelter?

This facility will provide shelter to those who are considered the “most vulnerable” population of single adults, couples, and families. This shelter will be for those experiencing a housing crisis, who have limited or no resources, and seek a temporary or emergency housing solution. Referrals will be made through the Kitsap County Housing Solutions Center.

9. How many people will be housed there?

This depends on two factors: When filled to capacity, the shelter will support 75 guests. The actual number of days a guest may live in the shelter will depend on the support they need and resources that are available. When a guest is placed in a more permanent housing option, a new guest will be admitted. The shelter could house 100 – 150 guests a year. The total number of guests admitted into the shelter program will be determined by the Kitsap Rescue Mission Program Director and the Kitsap County Director of Human Services.

10. How will this facility be staffed?

Kitsap Rescue Mission will staff the facility. The staffing plan includes a full-time program manager; case managers; substance abuse counsellors and medical, dental, and mental health professional support services. Staff will be monitored and supervised to ensure they follow best practices and they receive specialized training in trauma-informed care, de-escalation techniques, and shelter safety protocols. Religious services and recovery programs may be offered, but attendance will not be required.

11. What “case management” will be provided?

Kitsap Rescue Mission’s case managers will address how to resolve and overcome barriers to permanent stable housing. In addition, guests will have access a wide range of support services, including mental health programs, treatment programs, transportation, employment support and placement. The goal is for individuals to find personal health, achieve stability, independence, and move into permanent housing as soon as a housing solution is available.

12. How long will guests be allowed to live and receive services in the shelter?

Emergency shelter is provided for an initial period of 90 days in which shelter guests are encouraged to participate in the Housing Stability Planning process, and to engage with KRM's Housing Navigators who assist shelter guests in finding and securing permanent housing. Shelter guests can apply for an additional 30-days of shelter after the initial 90-day period and can be extended monthly thereafter.

13. Will drug use be allowed?

No. Guests will be required to sign a Guest Agreement that forbids the use of drugs and alcohol on the property and inside the Pacific Building. The no drugs/no alcohol policy will be strictly enforced.

14. Will this be like the Salvation Army ? Will people line up every night to get in?

No. This is not a “drop-in” center. This is a residential co-shelter facility. Once a guest is enrolled in this shelter housing program, the person is assigned a bed and has access to the facility 24/7. Only registered guests will have access to resources and case management services.

NEIGHBORHOOD QUESTIONS

15. What type of security is planned?

The County has plans to contract with a private security firm to ensure the security of the facility and the safety of the guests and staff. Security will restrict and limit access to those who are authorized to receive services. Limited access will also address neighbor concerns.

Additionally, Kitsap County has upgraded lighting, fencing, and site security systems both inside and outside the facility.

16. Will the Community be involved?

A Community Relations Group will be formed to enhance communications about shelter operations, address property issues, or respond to grievances about registered guests, staff, or service providers. Members of the Community Relations Group will include neighbors and members of the local business community. Kitsap Rescue Mission's Shelter Program Manager, and a representative from the Kitsap County Department of Human Services will also participate.

17. Will this shelter be an added burden to first responders?

We expect that Kitsap Rescue Mission's plan to provide wraparound services will decrease the need for first responder services. Kitsap County Sheriff's Department and South Kitsap Fire and Rescue support the shelter. Experience shows that people with chronic health and mental health conditions can be stabilized and achieve greater health when they are housed, thereby reducing emergency calls.

18. Will the shelter increase the number of homeless people in the neighborhood?

No. This co-shelter facility as a housing solution will reduce the number of people currently unhoused in Port Orchard. Once individuals are enrolled in this congregate co-shelter housing program they will have access to food, hygiene facilities, restrooms, showers, laundry, medical care, and other services. There will be no need to seek resources outside the facility.

Additionally, the Pacific Building co-shelter facility is not a "drop in" center. There is little incentive for loitering or trespassing on the property.

19. Will this program help unhoused persons from Port Orchard?

Yes. Unhoused people and families from Port Orchard who qualify as part of the "most vulnerable" unhoused population, will be offered shelter in the Pacific Building. However, this is a Kitsap County shelter not a City of Port Orchard shelter. The Kitsap County Housing Solutions Center will encourage people who identify as former residents of Port Orchard to seek shelter at the Pacific Building. We know that people with limited or no resources prefer to stay in the community they know and have access to resources. We hope that all who are unhoused or housing insecurity will register at the Housing Solutions Center for available County services.

20. Where can I find more information about this project?

More information is available at www.kcowa.us/skhousing.