



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth - Communications Office

411 West First Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-730-5230 | www.duluthmn.gov | Emily Larson, Mayor

For more information contact Phil Jents, Communications and Policy Officer 218-730-5315

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SUBJECT: Community Partners Announce West Duluth Emergency Warming Center Pilot Project

BY: Pakou Ly, Communications Office

Community Partners Announce West Duluth Emergency Warming Center Pilot Project

[Duluth, MN] The City of Duluth, in partnership with St. Louis County, CHUM, and with additional support from Loaves and Fishes, announce a new West Duluth Emergency Warming Center Pilot Project.

The West Duluth Emergency Warming Center Pilot Project is a safe and welcoming night time warming space located at City Center West (5830 Grand Avenue) where people experiencing homelessness and other people in need can stay warm. The Warming Center, on nights where the National Weather Service predicts that the temperature at Duluth Sky Harbor Airport will drop to zero or below, will operate from 10 pm to 6:30 am. Activation of the Warming Center for any specific night will be determined by the City of Duluth and shared through CHUM staff and/or contacts and Loaves and Fishes.

The estimated 125-to-200 people who are homeless and unsheltered at any one time in Duluth are at elevated risk of injury or death during periods of dangerously low temperatures. Emergency warming centers have been used in other cold climate communities to protect these citizens from dangerous cold. The main goal of the warming center is to provide a space to keep people warm and safe overnight during periods of dangerous cold.

“Duluth is not a community that shies away from difficult issues,” said Mayor Emily Larson. “And I am so proud that we have been able to collectively name this issue and take steps to test out something that may actually save lives. I want to thank St. Louis County for graciously stepping up to find funds to make this pilot happen, to CHUM for their constant work to assist those experiencing homelessness, and to our staff for working tirelessly, selflessly, and creatively to find solutions.”

“Protecting our most vulnerable citizens is a core service for St. Louis County. It’s the heart of what we do,” said Commissioner Patrick Boyle, chair of the St. Louis County Board. “This Warming Center pilot project, like so much of our work, can only be done in partnership with others, and so I, too, echo thanks for the City of Duluth, CHUM and others for their leadership in trying to find a solution to protect people in need from our bitterly cold winters.”

“CHUM is grateful for the response of the City and County to help make the Warming Center possible. We will learn a lot in the process, and hopefully come up with better long-range solutions for addressing the extent of homelessness in our community. That will require the cooperation of the public, private and non-profit sector in unprecedented ways if we are to achieve anything close to the end of homelessness. The Warming Center is a good step towards that goal,” said Lee Stuart, CHUM Executive Director.

CHUM staff will be available at the Warming Center to talk to guests and can provide information and referral for services as needed.

The current project is a pilot that will end when the winter season for 2019 comes to a close. The partners will review the effectiveness of the pilot and engage the community to determine next steps.

For more information, please contact the City of Duluth Planning and Economic Development Department at: 218-730-5580; or email planning@duluthmn.gov

For those wishing to provide donations of any kind, should first visit CHUM’s website to determine the best ways to do so: <https://www.chumduluth.org/contributions.htm>

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