

Our Mission: We strive to provide exceptional services that enhance quality of life and promote a safe, healthy, and welcoming community for all.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County officials break ground on Emergency Housing Services Building

Officials from Washington County and the Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA) broke ground on the Emergency Housing Services Building (EHSB) Nov. 12.

The \$12 million project located on the south end of the county's Government Center campus in Stillwater will be the county's first permanent short-term emergency housing facility for adults without children, who are experiencing homelessness.

Despite the increase in emergency housing capacity for individuals post-pandemic, Washington County remains behind for adults without children when compared to other Minnesota counties. An average of 166 people in Washington County are experiencing homelessness at any given time. Due to the lack of capacity, approximately 54 residents annually have to seek shelter in neighboring counties.

Once complete, the two-story, 30,000-square-foot EHSB facility will offer 30 living units with private bathrooms, an onsite computer lab to aid in job search and workforce development, a commercial kitchen and large shared dining area, storage space, and parking.

In addition to offering a safe, dignified place to live, the EHSB will provide residents with professional support services to help them navigate homelessness and move toward stable housing.

The facility will have around-the-clock staffing from a contracted service provider, improving access to support services for residents to accommodate their jobs and schedules. Residents will have convenient access to an array of services such as economic assistance, connection to jobs, social service support, assistance with transportation, help in finding housing and gathering important documents, and health and well-being support.

Washington County CDA is serving as the project's developer and construction will begin this fall with an expected completion by the end of 2025.

Residents will be referred to the program by the Washington County Homeless Outreach Services Team and must meet eligibility criteria, including being over 18, passing a criminal background check, having no active substance use, and agreeing to actively participate in a housing plan. Anyone accepted to the program must be physically present and unsheltered in Washington County. The anticipated length of stay is estimated at 90 days. Residents can choose to stay with a partner and pets will be allowed within program guidelines.

For additional information and updates on the project, visit WashingtonCountyMN.gov/EHSB or contact EmergencyHousing@co.washington.mn.us.