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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County officials cut the ribbon on the Emergency Housing Services Building November 19

Washington County officials and leaders from the Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA) cut the ribbon Nov. 19 to officially open the Emergency Housing Services Building (EHSB) — the county’s first short-term emergency housing facility for adults experiencing homelessness.

Located on the south end of the Government Center campus in Stillwater, the \$12 million, 30,000-square-foot facility has 30 private living units, each with its own bathroom. It significantly increases the county’s capacity to provide safe, dignified temporary housing for individuals during a time of growing need. On any given night, an average of 166 people in Washington County are experiencing homelessness, and historically, as many as 54 residents each year have had to seek shelter outside the county.

“Homelessness does not discriminate. It touches individuals and families across our county, often during the most vulnerable moments of their lives,” said Washington County Commissioner Bethany Cox, District 3. “This building stands as a testament to compassion backed by action.”

The EHSB provides more than just shelter for its residents — it offers on-site support services to help them stabilize and transition to permanent housing. Residents have access to a computer lab for job searches and workforce development, a commercial kitchen and shared dining area, storage space, and parking.

Stepping Stone Emergency Housing will staff the building around the clock, ensuring residents can access services that support their schedules — including connections to jobs, transportation assistance, case management, and help gathering essential documents.

The Washington County CDA served as the project’s developer. Construction began in November 2024 and was completed on time and within budget.

“The success of this project was no small feat and is a testament to the commitment and collaboration of the many partners that brought it to fruition,” said Washington County CDA Executive Director Melissa Taphorn. “These partnerships are ongoing; as individuals exit these doors, it is the CDA’s hope to welcome them into the comfort and stability of our homes.”

Referrals to the new program will begin in mid- to late-December. Participants must meet eligibility criteria, pass a background check, and be adults without children, unsheltered in Washington County, and actively working toward a housing plan. Residents may stay with partners, and pets are allowed under program guidelines.

All requests for EHSB stays are coordinated through Washington County Community Services. For more information or updates on the project, visit WashingtonCountyMN.gov/EHSB or email EmergencyHousing@WashingtonCountyMN.gov.

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Photo cutlines:

052: The Washington County Board of Commissioners, the Washington County Community Development Agency Board, state and city officials, and staff cut the ribbon of the Emergency Housing Services Building on Nov. 19, 2025.

054: The Washington County Board of Commissioners and the Washington County Community Development Agency Board at the ribbon cutting of the Emergency Housing Services Building on Nov. 19, 2025.

Full resolution versions of these photos and additional photos are available upon request.