

# Situation Report

<b>Situation Report:</b> 1.2.2022		
<b>Incident Name:</b> December 2021 Winter Weather		
<b>OERS Number:</b> OERS #2021-3265		
<b>EOC:</b> Fully Activated	<b>Unified Commanders:</b> Jonna Papaefthimiou, Portland Bureau of Emergency Management Mohammad Bader, Department of County Human Services Marc Jolin, Joint Office of Homeless Services Chris Voss, Multnomah County Emergency Management	
<b>Date:</b> 1/2/2022	<b>Time:</b> 1852	Please note that this situation report is available to the public.

To submit updates / actions to this report, email the Multnomah County EOC Situation Unit at [eoc.situationunit@multco.us](mailto:eoc.situationunit@multco.us) with the subject line: Update for December 2021 Winter Weather Situation Report.

## Multnomah County and City of Portland December 2021 Winter Weather Emergency Response

### Executive Summary

All emergency severe weather shelters closed today, January 2 at 8:00am. Year-round and seasonal winter shelters remain open by reservation. Anyone seeking alternative shelter options and other social and health services should dial 2-1-1.

To prepare for the winter weather incident forecasted by the National Weather Service for the 2021 holiday season, Multnomah County and the City of Portland initiated a collaborative response, implementing lessons from the Severe Winter Weather in February 2021 and Heat Waves in Summer 2021.

Winter weather planning began well in advance of this round of winter weather. As the forecast for cold temperatures and snow developed, City and County response sections began standing up for this event on December 20. The Joint Emergency Operations Center (EOC) officially opened on December 23.

On December 23, 2021, Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury and City of Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler declared a State of Emergency as the region braced for a prolonged stretch of freezing temperatures and snow.

[Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury's Emergency Declaration](#) (December 24th until January 3rd)  
[City of Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler's Emergency Declaration](#) (December 24th until Midnight, January 2nd)  
[Oregon Governor Kate Brown's Emergency Declaration](#) (December 24th until January 3rd)

- The first five severe weather shelters opened at 3:00 pm on **Saturday, December 25, 2021** under 24-hour operations. Overnight lows in Portland dropped to 32° with a half inch to one inch of snow at low elevations. 164 people sheltered overnight at the five locations.
- On **Sunday, December 26**, a shelter at SE Market Street opened under operation by Transition Projects (TPI) in response to The Portland Building having reached capacity on its first night. Overnight lows dropped to the high 20s. 248 people sheltered overnight at the six locations.
- Capacity was expanded on **Monday, December 27** through the relocation from the Sunrise Center in Gresham to a larger facility at Reynolds High School in Troutdale, both operated by Cultivate Initiatives. The Sunrise Center had reached capacity on its first night open and additional room was determined to be needed in East County. Temperatures remained below freezing and another 2 to 2.5 inches of snow fell overnight. 339 people sheltered overnight at the six locations.
- On the evening of **Tuesday, December 28**, the Oregon Convention Center was opened as an emergency overflow shelter as guest counts continued to rise. Nighttime lows were again below 30° and snow remained on the ground. 448 people sheltered overnight at the seven locations.
- The Oregon Convention Center fully opened on **Wednesday, December 29** after enough staff were recruited to fill shifts. Overnight lows again dropped into the 20s. 559 people sheltered overnight at the seven locations.
- All shelters, except for Reynolds High School, closed on mid-morning of **Thursday, December 30** as temperatures rose into the 40s and melted snow. Overnight lows stayed near 30 degrees with small flurries. Reynolds High School sheltered 65 people.
- Colder temperatures returned on **Friday, December 31**, resulting in three shelters reopening for 24-hour operations. Nighttime lows in Portland dropped to 25°, with slightly colder temperatures in East County. 254 people sheltered at the four locations.
- On **Saturday, January 1** capacity at the Oregon Convention Center was increased to meet demand from central city guests seeking shelter. Overnight lows again dropped to 25°. 300 people sheltered at the four locations.
- All shelters closed at 8am on **Sunday, January 2**. Overnight temperatures rose into the 30s.

## Winter Weather Impacts

[One death due to hypothermia was confirmed on December 25](#). The deceased was found outdoors but was not unhoused. We express our sincere regrets to their loved ones.

Portland Fire and Rescue responded to [at least three people injured, including two seriously, from heating fires](#).

Emergency room visits were elevated during periods of snow but only minor cold-related illness or injury was reported. Hospitals operated at crisis levels throughout the incident due to COVID-19.

Temporary road closures occurred due to dangerous conditions and accidents. Some roads that closed for at least a period of hours included Cornelius Pass Road, several streets in the West Hills, NE 238th Drive in Wood Village and eastbound Interstate-84. As snow melted, the Portland Bureau of Transportation returned to normal operations on January 1.

The Portland Water Bureau provided tips and precautions through social media and local news on how to prepare homes for the winter weather and avoid frozen pipes. No major water line breaks were reported.

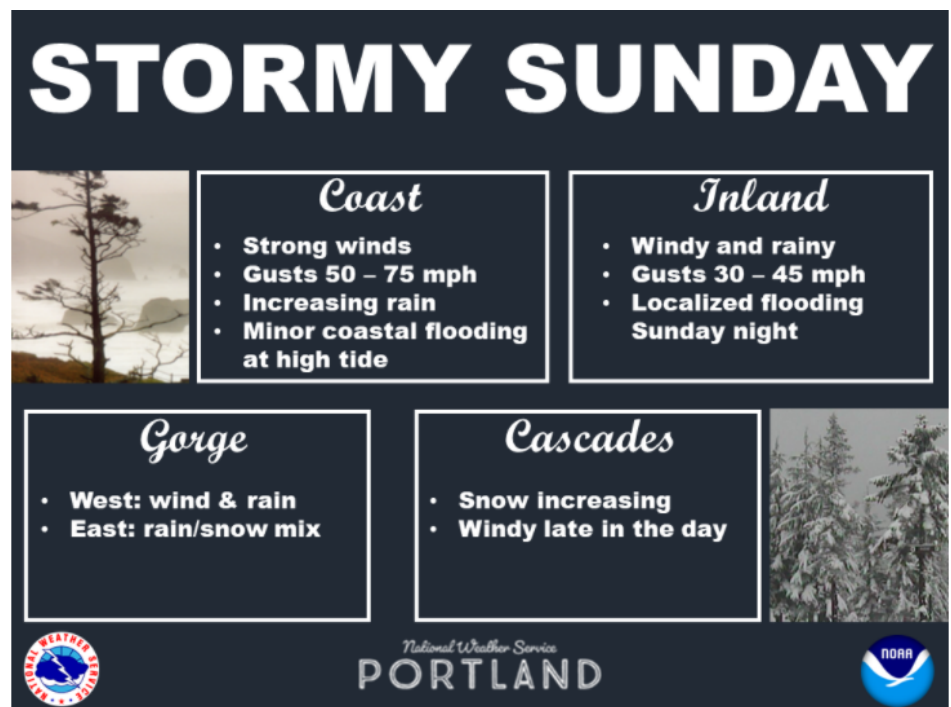
Multnomah County delayed most units opening until 11am on December 28. The City of Portland maintained normal operations throughout the event. Community Center programs were delayed or canceled over several days. County facilities were serviced each night and maintained accessible parking lots and walkways.

## National Weather Service (NWS) Forecast


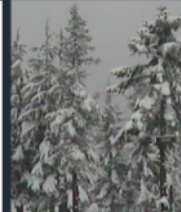
### January 2-3, 2021 Weather

#### Situational Update



- **Rain is projected to arrive late this afternoon and increase in intensity through the evening into overnight.**
- **At 1:05pm on January 2, the [temperature at the Portland International Airport \(KPDX\)](#) was 36°F, with moderate winds from the southeast and a wind chill of 26°F. Temperatures are projected to increase steadily through the day to 43°F in advance of the arrival of rain.**
- **Overnight, temperatures are forecast to drop to 40°F, with especially heavy rain predicted to fall between 10pm and 4am.**



**STORMY SUNDAY**

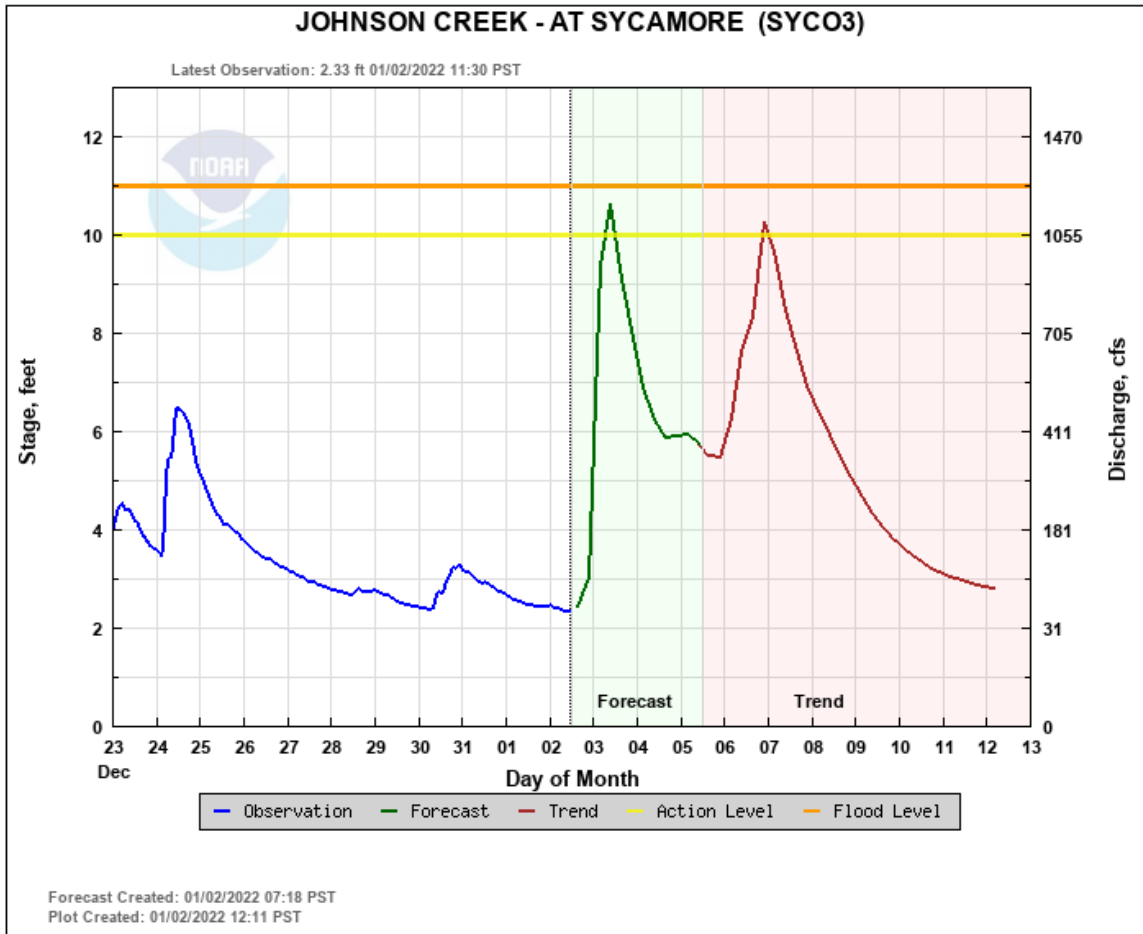
 <p><b>Coast</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong winds</li><li>• Gusts 50 – 75 mph</li><li>• Increasing rain</li><li>• Minor coastal flooding at high tide</li></ul>	<p><b>Inland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Windy and rainy</li><li>• Gusts 30 – 45 mph</li><li>• Localized flooding Sunday night</li></ul>
<p><b>Gorge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• West: wind &amp; rain</li><li>• East: rain/snow mix</li></ul>	<p><b>Cascades</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Snow increasing</li><li>• Windy late in the day</li></ul> 

National Weather Service  
**PORTLAND**



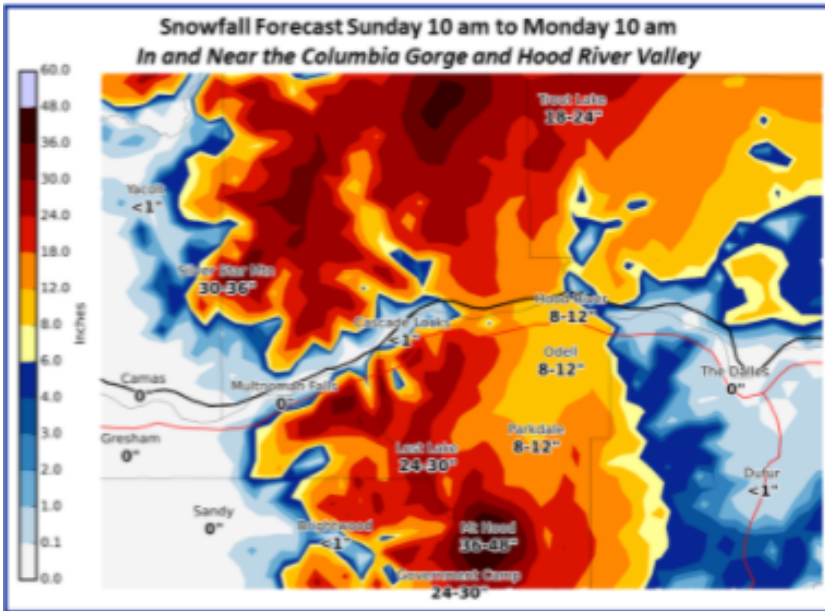
Active weather will continue for Sunday, with high winds along the coast, breezy conditions inland, and heavy accumulating snow in the Cascades. For more information on travel conditions, dial 511, or visit [wsdot.com](#) or [tripcheck.com](#).

- A [Wind Advisory](#) continues to be in effect from 2:00 pm on Sunday, January 2 and until 1:00 am on Monday morning. Winds are forecast to be 20-30 miles per hour, with 45 mile per hour gusts possible - with even stronger winds possible at the mouth of the Columbia River Gorge in far eastern Multnomah County.
- Due to heavy rain, a [Flood Watch](#) was also issued from this evening through Monday morning. Rain is predicted to continue throughout the week and will elevate stream levels and cause ponding and urban stormwater effects in areas with poor drainage.



**At the Johnson Creek gauge, located between Pleasant Valley and the Springwater Corridor in Southeast Portland, stream levels are still predicted to rise above Action Level but fall just short of Minor Flood Stage. A second peak is possible later in the week, but predictions in the 'Trend' portion of the graph are considered to be extremely uncertain.**

**Campsites located in low-lying areas along Johnson Creek will be impacted by rising stream levels before they reach the Action Stage. The Joint Office of Homeless Services has directed outreach teams to warn unhoused communities along Johnson Creek of the threat, with assistance from Rangers from the Portland Parks Bureau. Portland Fire and 911 have also been notified of the elevated risk. Signs were placed at shelters and staff were given information to alert departing guests of the risk.**



**Heavy snow is also predicted at higher elevations during this storm, including locations above 2000' in eastern Multnomah County. All passes in the Cascades will be impacted by snow, as will roads in the Hood River Valley.**

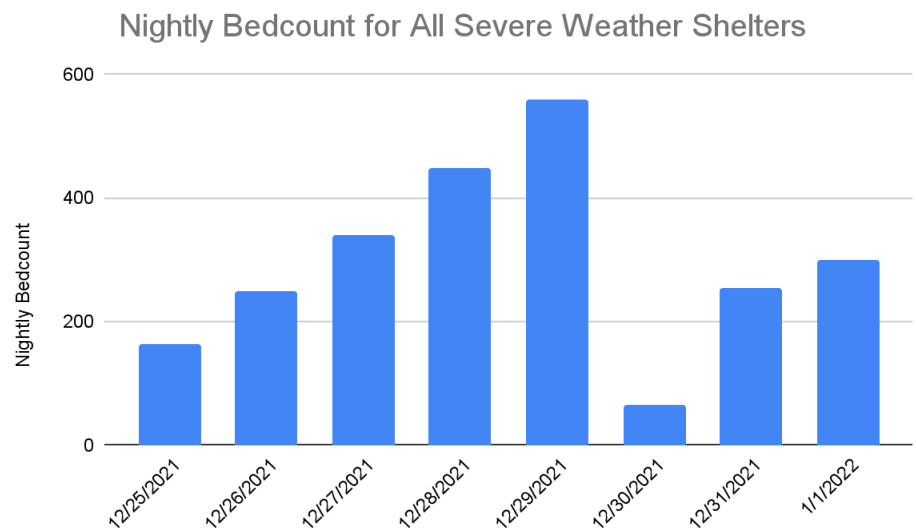
If you see someone outside who is unsheltered and whose life appears to be in danger, call 9-1-1. If you are concerned about someone you know during cold or wet weather please call Multnomah County's non-emergency response line at 503-823-3333 and request a welfare check.

## Operations Section

The Operations Section coordinated and ensured the support of warming interventions. Warming interventions are designed to provide options for those seeking respite from the severe weather, and include severe winter weather shelters and the distribution of warming resources to those remaining outdoors.

### Severe Weather Shelters

Under the guidance of the Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS), Multnomah County and the City of Portland's Mass Care and Shelter team provide compassionate care for community guests seeking relief from the cold. They operate and support severe winter weather shelters which are a type of [Disaster Resource Center \(DRC\)](#) with heat, warming resources, water, food, and support services.



**Please note: All severe weather shelters closed on December 30 except for Reynolds High School (operated by Cultivate Initiatives)**

Severe Weather Shelter	12/25/21	12/26/21	12/27/21	12/28/21	12/29/21	12/30/21	12/31/21	1/1/22	Site Totals
East Portland Community Center	22/40	40/40	42/42	42/42	44/44	Closed	36/40	30/42	256
Market St.	Closed	24/125	74/125	111/111	113/124	Closed	Closed	Closed	322
Mt. Scott Community Center	18/21	46/62	67/84	80/80	87/87	Closed	18/88	52/77	368
Oregon Convention Center	Closed	Closed	Closed	45/150	145/160	Closed	143/149	170/170	503
Portland Building	70/70	63/63	69/69	70/70	70/70	Closed	Closed	Closed	342
Reynolds High School	Closed	Closed	46/105	47/115	50/115	65/115	57/115	48/115	313
Salvation Army Moore St. Gym	14/50	35/60	41/60	53/60	50/60	Closed	Closed	Closed	193
Sunrise Center	40/40	40/40	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	80
<b>Daily Totals:</b>	<b>164/221</b>	<b>248/390</b>	<b>339/485</b>	<b>448/628</b>	<b>559/660</b>	<b>65/115</b>	<b>254/392</b>	<b>300/404</b>	<b>2377</b>

**Table (above): The daily amounts and totals represent the nightly bed counts / reported shelter capacities.**

City and County shelters have a “no turn away” policy because of life-threatening cold temperatures and created additional capacity as required during this event while activation thresholds were met. Severe weather shelters do not require identification or any other documentation for entry. All shelters were ADA accessible and pets were welcome at all locations. Survival kits with life-saving gear — tents, sleeping bags, warm clothing — were distributed at each severe weather shelter site.

In partnership with 211, the City and County offered free transportation for guests to shelters, using City and County resources. Trimet waived fares for people traveling to a shelter, and provided ticket vouchers for guests leaving shelters. Volunteers from Portland’s Neighborhood Emergency Teams partnered with 211 to provide additional remote dispatching assistance and were available to respond to requests to clear snow from driveways and sidewalks for persons with mobility issues through Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) dispatch.

**COVID-19 Safety Protocols**

To ensure the safety of guests exiting the shelters, guests were provided with COVID-19 safety guidance. Respiratory masks were made available for guests and staff while at shelters, and when leaving. Policies were put in place to move guests or staff with COVID-19 symptoms from shelters to alternate locations where they could be isolated.

Vaccination clinics were made available for guests at all severe weather shelters. This service was supported by Multnomah County Public Health and American Medical Response (AMR). At least 78 vaccinations were provided over the duration of the response.

## Transportation

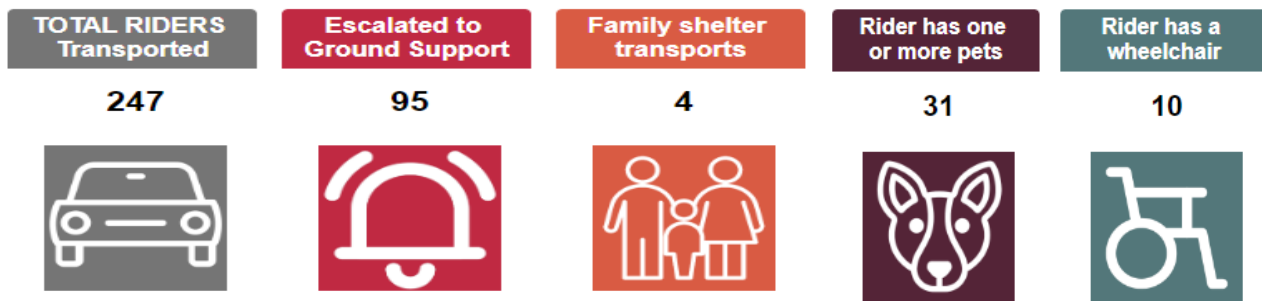
[211info](#) connects people with health and social service organizations. At the core of this work is the Community Information Center, supported by 211’s Resource Database team. 211 provides enhanced information and referral and assistance programs that support specific populations and service needs. Preplanning for the December 2021 cold weather incident included adding severe weather shelter information to prominently feature on the 211info homepage including county-specific information about severe weather shelters in 29 Oregon counties.

### 211info/NET Dispatch

- Total transportation numbers for the evening of January 1-2:
  - 25 transports requests were filled.
  - 1 new motel placement was made and 3 individuals extended motel stays.

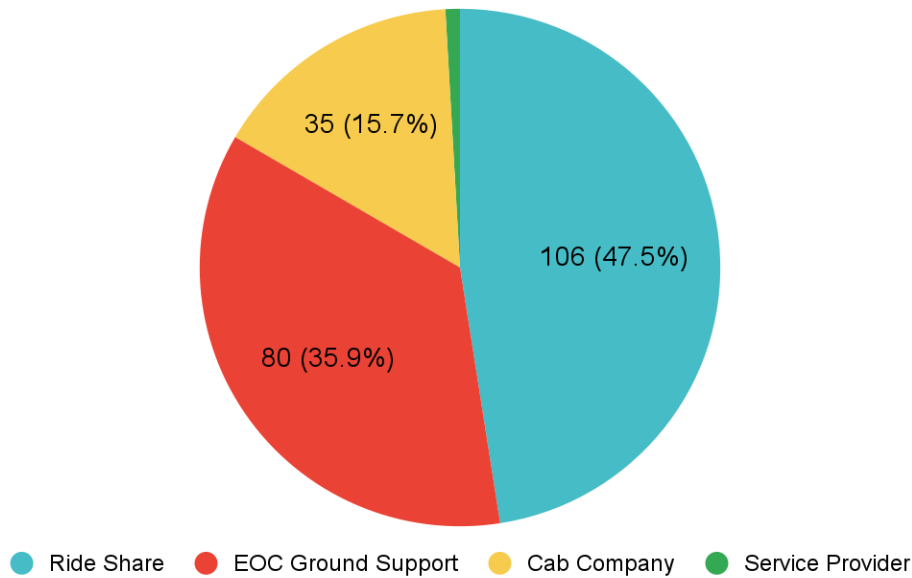
211 served as the first point of contact for people needing rides to severe weather shelters or alternate accommodations. Over the course of the response, 211 arranged 243 rides through EOC ground transport, private rideshare companies and taxis, and other service providers. The graphic below shows a breakdown of some characteristics of rides arranged.

### Winter 2021 - 2022 Shelter Transport Data



The Portland Bureau of Emergency Management (PBEM) Ground Transportation team fielded 95 of those 211-originated ride requests, but also provided transport between shelters when needed and filled special transport needs - such as taking guests from Reynolds High School to more transit-adjacent locations after close on January 2. Portland Fire and Rescue assisted the unit with drivers and guest transport vans. The Portland Water Bureau also provided the Ground Transportation Unit with a 9 passenger van.

## 211 Arranged Transports by Provider



### Outreach

Outreach teams including [Transition Projects](#), [Cascadia](#), [JOIN](#), [Janus Youth Program](#), [Multnomah County Sheriff's Office HOPE team](#), [Portland Street Response](#), and others performed outreach throughout the incident to encourage unhoused neighbors to seek shelter as the temperatures dropped, while also providing cold weather gear and monitoring any closed shelters to redirect guests to other locations.

The Joint Office of Homeless Services and outreach providers divided Multnomah County into 37 zones to ensure all areas of the County received outreach support. Outreach teams were active every evening throughout the response.

The Joint Office Supply Center remained open through January 1 to distribute winter gear to outreach partners and mutual aid groups.

Between December 20 and January 1, these efforts distributed a total of:

- 2,079 sleeping bags
- 2,646 tents
- 9,808 pairs of socks
- 3,400 Mylar thermal sleeping bags
- 1,846 hoodies
- 5,698 gloves
- 4,640 tarps
- 5,939 blankets
- 3,930 ponchos
- 7,277 hot hands
- 1,993 sweatpants
- 5,614 hats

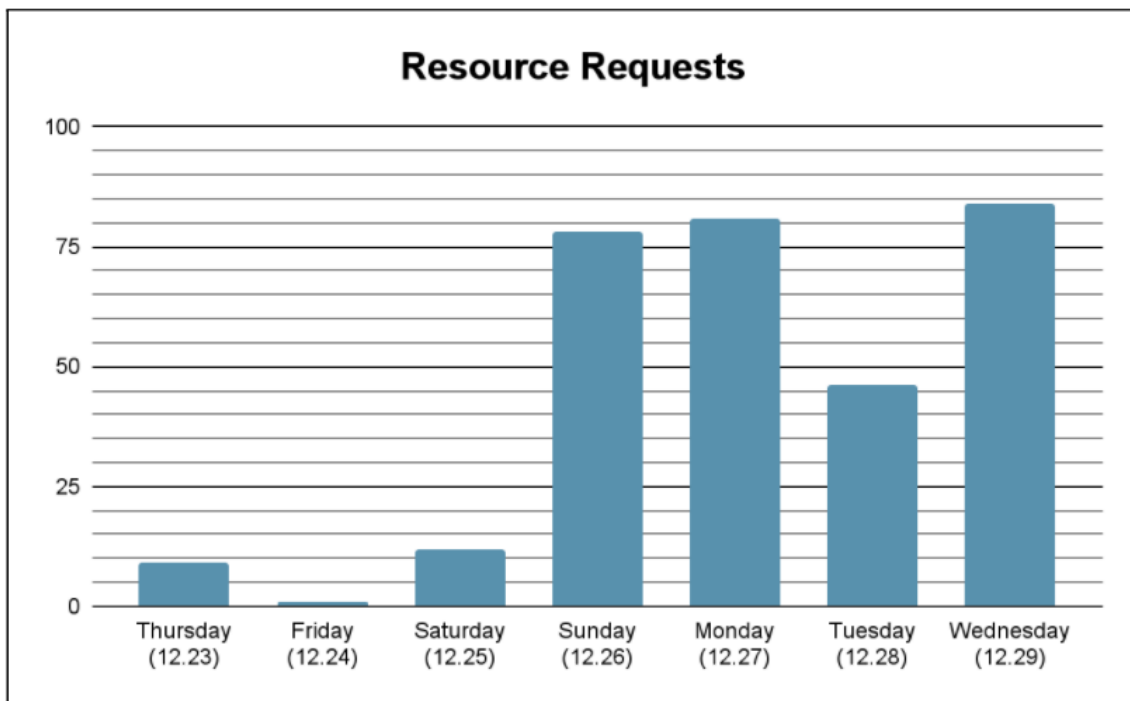
Visit Multnomah County's Warming Shelters and Homelessness site for more information, including volunteer and donation opportunities, [click here](#).



## Logistics

In this winter weather response, the Logistics Section's priorities included purchasing, coordinating, and delivering the supplies needed to set-up, maintain, and break down shelter sites and deliver requested needs to community partners.

The Logistics Section received approximately 425 resource requests to support inclement weather operations. Below is a breakdown of supply and transportation resource requests per day (table updated as of mid-day December 29):



## **Supply Unit**

On January 2, The Supply Unit ensured that all shelters had cleaning supplies and demobilization checklists so that facilities could be returned to site owners in at least as good of condition as they were received, allowing them to resume normal operations as soon as possible. The unit was also prepared to assist for any last minute requests.

On January 1, the Supply Unit, through the work of Multnomah County Ground Support, arranged 25 pickups, deliveries, or shopping trips to support shelters, arrange for winter gear to be distributed as guests exited and prepare for demobilization.

The Supply Unit Team staged, re-ordered, and procured supplies and equipment needed to maintain operations and open additional shelters. This included arranging floor protection, shopping for clothing and food, and arranging additional bedding.

## Food Unit

As of mid-day January 1, the Logistics Food Unit had provided 6,022 meals to severe weather shelters in coordination with community partners. Guests at every shelter were provided breakfast, lunch, and dinner while shelters were open. The Food Unit delivered meals in coordination with US Foods, [Feed the Mass](#), [Blanchet House](#), and [Stone Soup PDX](#).

## Staffing

Staffing constraints impacted every element of the December 2021 Winter Weather response. Efforts were made throughout the incident to recruit drivers, severe weather shelter staff and outreach workers through social media and websites and direct appeals to County and City staff.

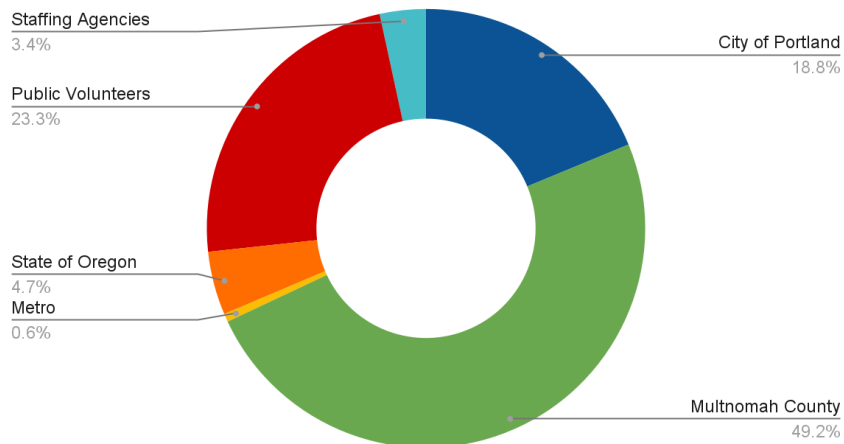
As of January 2, 1,587 shelter shifts were filled during the course of the winter weather incident. The total does not include shifts filled in logistics and ground transport, demobilization, staffing, planning and other roles.

Shelter shifts were filled by 773 unique persons, meaning each volunteer worked over two shifts on average.

Below are the cumulative number of shelter shift sign ups by source through closing of shelters on January 2. Shelter shifts included positions for People In Charge (PICs), Medical Staff, Behavioral Health Staff, and General Staff.

- 811 shifts - Multnomah County employees
- 309 shifts - City of Portland employees
- 345 shifts - Public volunteers (including Portland Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) members)
- 10 shifts - Metro employees
- 77 shifts - Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) Staff
- 56 shifts - temporary staffing agency workers

Shelter Staff Shift Share



The Administration Section strived to ensure recruitment and training that created an inclusive, positive, productive, and healthy work environment across all response operations. They provided equity and inclusion support, as well as human resources and labor relations consultation. Staffing for the entire response was coordinated through this section. A [series of training videos](#) was designed to help prepare volunteers to work in shelters.

### **City of Portland Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NETs)**

Portland [NETs](#) provided critical assistance in this response in several aspects of the response including the following:

- Assisting with 211 and providing shelter transportation dispatch.
- Driving and logistics section support roles.
- Supporting supply preparations at Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) and County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) warehouses.
- Clearing storm drains.
- Providing accessibility assistance at TriMet stops.
- Responding to requests via Portland Bureau of Transportation dispatch for snow clearing on sidewalks and driveways for those with mobility or access needs.

### **[Public Information Office \(PIO\) and Joint Information System \(JIS\)](#)**

A Joint Information System (JIS) was established on December 23 between Washington, Clackamas, Clark and Multnomah County and the cities of Portland and Gresham to coordinate regional messaging. The JIS met daily and posted regular updates to the [Care for When It's Cold](#) web resource. The JIS responded to a number of media requests, had a shared media protocol, and a social media plan where they monitored and posted messages in multiple languages. A number of resource materials were created to publicize the up to date status of severe weather shelters and to encourage community members to volunteer for shifts.

- [Winter Travel Guide](#) for transportation resources, winter driving tips and snow-plow priority route information
- [Cold Weather Tips to Print and Post](#): Includes the
  - [Help for when it's cold - Information for Older Adults](#)
  - [Help for when it's cold -Winter Safety at Home](#)
  - [Help for when it's cold - Information for Cold Weather Safety](#)
  - [Help for when it's cold - Information for Pet Owners](#)
- The City and County have multiple social media accounts that are updated regularly in different languages with emergency messaging. Please visit and share:
  - [Multnomah County Emergency Management Facebook](#)
  - [Multnomah County Facebook](#)
  - [Multnomah County Instagram](#)
  - [Multnomah County Twitter](#)
  - [City of Portland Facebook](#)
  - [City of Portland Twitter](#)



# Stay Informed, Get Help, Get Involved

## Activated Call Centers

Call Center	Phone Number	Email	Hours
<a href="#">211 Call Center</a>	211 or 866-698-6155	<a href="mailto:help@211info.org">help@211info.org</a>	Seven days a week, 24 hours a day.
<a href="#">Behavioral Health Call Center</a>	503-988-4888 Toll-free: 800-716-9769 TTY: 711		Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week
<a href="#">Aging &amp; Disabilities Resource Connection</a>	503-988-3646	<a href="mailto:adrc@multco.us">adrc@multco.us</a>	Information and assistance to older people, people with disabilities, and caregivers, open 24 hours a day, seven days a week
Multnomah County COVID-19 Call Center	503-988-8939		Information and assistance available on Severe Heat resources, cooling centers, and COVID-19 vaccine and testing sites and business guidance

## More questions?

- Consult [Multnomah County Care for When It's Cold](#).
- Contact [211](#):
  - Call 2-1-1 (open 24/7)
  - Visit [211info](#)
  - Text your zip code to 899211 (standard message and data rates may apply)

## Media

For media inquiries related to the December 2021 Winter Weather incident please contact **Kate Yeiser (503-410-4524)**, Multnomah County Public Information Media Coordinators

Document Development Information	
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Date; Time Approved	1/2/2022; 1952
This is the situation report for 1/2/2022	