



2025-2026

LANARK COUNTY

Winter Weather Response
A Homeless-Centred Plan for Keeping
People Safe

Lanark County Winter Weather Response Plan

Effective: November 15, 2025 - March 31, 2026

Overview

Individuals experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable to the health risks posed by winter weather hazards due to prolonged exposure to the elements. This risk is compounded by limited access to warm shelters, adequate clothing, nutritious food, and healthcare resources. As Lanark County faces harsh winter conditions and increasingly unpredictable weather events, it is crucial to address these risks effectively.

Purpose

The primary goal of the Winter Weather Response Plan is to mitigate the harmful health impacts of winter weather on individuals experiencing homelessness in Lanark County. Homelessness not only heightens exposure to the cold but also significantly increases the risk of illness and infection. The transient nature of homelessness makes it challenging to provide continuous medical care, particularly for those with pre-existing health conditions that may compromise their immune systems.

Objectives

The Winter Weather Response Plan aims to:

1. **Inform:** Alert individuals experiencing homelessness and those who engage with them about anticipated winter weather hazards.
2. **Activate:** Initiate response actions by agencies to adapt services and protect vulnerable populations from the dangers associated with winter weather.

Plan Components

This plan emphasizes proactive measures to prevent the direct impacts of winter weather hazards. It outlines preparedness and response strategies to safeguard the health and well-being of individuals experiencing homelessness during the winter months.

By implementing these strategies, we aim to foster a safer environment for our community's most vulnerable members and enhance their access to essential resources throughout the winter season.

Winter 2025-2026 Safety Plan for Lanark County

To ensure the safety and well-being of all residents during the winter months, we have identified four key initiatives for the 2025-2026 season:

1. Housing Assistance Program - Emergency Shelter Funds

As part of our Homeless Prevention Program (HPP) investment plan, we are allocating additional funding to enhance Emergency Shelter Solutions. This will facilitate increased hotel and motel stays during winter and allow for rapid responses to extreme weather advisories.

2. Increased Outreach Services

In collaboration with Lanark County Mental Health, we will expand outreach services focused on wellness checks and responding to reports of individuals outside in the cold. This initiative will include providing transportation to shelters and warming locations, as well as distributing blankets, sleeping bags, and warm winter clothing to those living outdoors. Additionally, we have hired a dedicated Housing Base Case Manager worker to address the specific needs of the homeless population.

3. Community Awareness Campaign

To raise awareness about winter weather hazards, we will launch a comprehensive campaign using posters, radio ads, social media, and our website. This campaign aims to inform individuals experiencing homelessness and those who interact with them about impending weather risks and available resources.

4. Adult Supportive Housing (ASH) - 3 Emergency Crisis Bed

Our Adult Supportive Housing portfolio now includes 90 beds, with the recent addition of 1 new emergency crisis bed, bringing the total to three emergency crisis beds in Lanark County. We will prioritize emergency and non-emergency beds for individuals experiencing homelessness who are unsheltered and listed on the By Name List.

These initiatives are designed to enhance the support and resources available to our community's most vulnerable members throughout the winter season.

5. NEW* Starting December 2025 LIFT (Lanark Integrated Frontline Team)

LIFT delivers essential health and social services through a mobile outreach team, meeting people in places they live and gather (encampments, community settings, supportive housing). Key service areas include:

- Harm Reduction: Distribution of safer use materials, naloxone kits, fentanyl testing strips, and education on overdose prevention.
- Overdose Prevention: Bystander training and overdose response education for individuals, families, and service providers.
- Housing Support: Assistance navigating ODSP & OW, the By Name List, and local housing services; collaboration to connect people to stable housing.
- Primary Care Access: Mobile clinics staffed by community paramedic and/or a Nurse Practitioner offering health assessments, wound care, medication support, and referrals.

Collaboration and Partner Engagement

Effective implementation of the Cold Weather Response Plan relies on strong coordination and collaboration among organizations and individuals involved in education, planning, and response efforts related to cold weather. Lanark County's Winter Response Plan has been developed in partnership with members of the By Name List Committee.

Role of Stakeholders

Committee members contribute to the Winter Response in diverse ways. Some provide direct services to individuals experiencing homelessness, while others offer specialized expertise in areas such as health, safety, weather, and funding resources to enhance service delivery and improve safety during winter months.

By Name List & Winter Response Planning Committee Membership:

- Lanark County Social Services
- Lanark County Interval House
- Lanark County Mental Health
- Lanark Leeds & Grenville Addictions and Mental Health
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Cornerstone Landing Youth Services
- Victim Services Lanark County
- Lanark County Community Paramedics
- Lanark County Ontario Provincial Police

Shared Responsibilities

All stakeholders are encouraged to:

- **Download the WeatherCAN App:** Consider subscribing for weather warnings from Environment Canada at Canadian Weather - Environment Canada.
- **Develop Response Plans:** Each organization should create its own strategy for responding to weather warnings.
- **Engage Actively:** Participate in committee meetings, consultations, evaluations, and communications. While not every representative can attend every meeting or respond to every email, it is crucial for all stakeholders to have a voice in the development, implementation, and enhancement of plans that protect the health and safety of individuals experiencing homelessness during winter.

In addition to these collective responsibilities, each stakeholder has specific roles to fulfill during different phases of the Winter Weather Response Plan. This collaborative approach is essential to ensuring a comprehensive and effective response to the challenges posed by winter weather.

Community Resource Manual:

<https://lanarkkids.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Lanark-County-Community-Resource-Manual.pdf>

Appendix A- Poster campaign

Appendix B- Website information

Homeless? We can help.

Please contact Lanark County Homeless Response Team

Phone 613-267-4200 x 2140

Toll free 1-888-952-6275

Monday-Friday 8:30 am - 4 pm

or

After-Hours Emergency 613-206-1486

LANARK
COUNTY



VICTIM SERVICES
Lanark County



Homeless Winter Response Strategy:

**To enhance services & supports available to
vulnerable residents, these additional
supports are in place:**

- **Outreach & Case Management Supports**
- **Adult Supportive Housing Beds-
Prioritized to Unsheltered**
- **Emergency Crisis Beds**
- **Emergency Winter Supplies**
- **Emergency Shelter Solutions: funding for
hotel/motel stay**

Effective from Nov 15, 2025 to Mar 31, 2026.

Check our website and social media pages for updates

Winter Weather Response: Stay Informed, Stay Safe!



To better serve our community's vulnerable residents this winter, we are implementing the following additional supports:

- **Outreach & Case Management:** Dedicated outreach teams will provide essential case management services to connect individuals with necessary resources and support.
- **Adult Supportive Housing Beds:** Priority access to supportive housing beds will be granted to unsheltered individuals, ensuring they have a safe place to stay.
- **Emergency Crisis Beds:** Three emergency crisis beds are available to provide immediate support for those in urgent need. This includes meals and 24 onsite staff within our Adult Supportive Housing portfolio.
- **Emergency Winter Supplies:** Distribution of essential winter supplies, including blankets, warm clothing, and other necessities, to help those in need stay safe and warm.
- **Increased Emergency Shelter Funding:** Additional funding has been allocated for hotel and motel stays to ensure immediate shelter options are available during extreme weather conditions.

Effective Dates: November 15, 2025 – March 31, 2026.

These measures aim to enhance the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable residents during the winter months.