



Updated Jan. 2023

ShelterCare Program at 190 Weber Street North, Waterloo

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is House of Friendship?

Emergency Shelter was the first service House of Friendship provided to this community when it was founded in 1939 by a group of women who took it upon themselves to care for men experiencing homelessness during the Great Depression. From those humble roots over 80 years ago, today we walk with those in need throughout Waterloo Region in four key service areas – Housing, Food, Addiction Treatment, and vital Neighbourhood supports for families living on low income Region-Wide. Learn more at www.houseoffriendship.org.

What services will be provided at this location?

The ShelterCare program (www.houseoffriendship.org/sheltercare) will provide emergency shelter and wrap-around supports for 100 men. These onsite wrap-around services, provided in partnership with community agencies, include primary health care, housing resources, addiction and mental health counselling, and in-house programming like art and music therapy. While there, participants are connected with a support worker who will help them on their journey to become housing ready, and then to find permanent housing.

When will your new program open?

The program is anticipated to begin operations towards the end of January 2023.

How are individuals selected to join your shelter program?

If someone thinks they may need access to emergency shelter in Waterloo Region, the first step is to call the Region of Waterloo's Housing Helpline at 519-624-9133 (available 24/7). In collaboration with the Region of Waterloo and other organizations in the emergency shelter network, we will ensure that individuals who are served at this location are those experiencing homelessness with the greatest depth of need and who would benefit most from this model, with consideration to those who have complex health care needs. We will build up to serving 100 men over the first few months.

Will program participants be able to come and go?

Our program participants are members of your community. You may expect to see them as you would fellow neighbours, running errands, going for walks, or visiting friends. They are able to access and enjoy the community the same way anyone else can.

Will other community members have easy access to the building?

The shelter building will have controlled, secure access, to ensure the privacy, dignity, safety and well-being of our shelter participants.

I'm concerned that these men will cause problems in our neighbourhood. What can you say to reassure me?

The individuals who come to our ShelterCare program have faced significant challenges in their lives - life has been incredibly difficult for them. Many of them have experienced trauma as children, have acquired brain injuries, and struggle with significant mental health and addiction. Our support is needed more than ever to help these vulnerable community members stabilize and get housed. While we'd love to say that this work is neat and tidy and it always runs smoothly and without any problems, that is not realistic. However, our commitment to you is to be good neighbours and manage challenges as they arise. Together with our community, we will listen to the needs and voices of our neighbours, balanced with the complex needs of those experiencing homelessness in Waterloo Region.

Will drugs and alcohol be used on site?

Addiction is a common health issue for those who are homeless. Our team, along with community partners, will be on-site 24/7 to support participants with issues that arise, and will provide health-care supports for those wishing to address their drug and alcohol use, including counselling and withdrawal management.

What measures will be taken to ensure that those staying in your program will follow all rules and guidelines set out by the House of Friendship?

Our program is staffed 24/7 by trained team members who work closely with the individuals in our shelter to maintain a safe and inclusive shared space.

Do you keep a list of the individuals who will be in the shelter?

Region-wide, shelter program participants are registered in a database system that is used nationally for those experiencing homelessness. Our program is staffed 24/7 with team members who know our program participants and their stories, and are equipped to support them.

What should I do if I see behaviour that concerns me? How do I report it?

- Criminal Behaviour and Emergencies - If you see any behaviour on site or near our shelter program that involves active criminal behaviour (e.g. violence, fire, theft, weapon present, indecency, property damage, etc.) or constitutes a medical emergency (such as a suspected overdose), please call 9-1-1 and ask for immediate assistance.
- Wellbeing or Non-Criminal Behaviour - If you are concerned about someone's wellbeing or behaviour, but do **not** think it's an active emergency, you may call Waterloo Regional Police at their non-emergency number to request support: 519-570-9777.
- Debris and Garbage – If the debris/garbage is found on city-owned property, please call Waterloo Municipal Enforcement Services at 519-747-8785.
- Needles – If needles are found on city-owned property please call:
 - Monday-Friday (7AM-4PM and excluding Statutory Holidays) – 519-886-2310
 - Monday-Friday (4PM-7AM), Weekends and Statutory Holidays – 519-579-9557
 - Email 24/7: sharpsc Cleanup@waterloo.ca
- Noise – Please call Waterloo Regional Police at their non-emergency number to request By-law Enforcement at 519-570-9777.

- Once the program is operational, you may call 519-742-8327 x 1, and ask to speak to the site supervisor.

I would like to support these men in some way. What can I do to help?

Those we serve in our ShelterCare program have been told they are unwanted, not worth much and don't have much value all their lives. You can change that. When they enter our program, your care and support will help them address the weighty challenges they face, to become healthier and transition to independent housing – and a new future. You can support by smiling and saying hello as you see these community members, or by providing a financial donation at www.houseoffriendship.org/donate, or by advocating with your neighbours that these individuals are part of your community and everyone should have the opportunity to belong and thrive.

I would like to know more about House of Friendship and your range of programs. Where can I get information?

You can visit www.houseoffriendship.org to learn about the ways that House of Friendship supports men, women and children throughout Waterloo Region, walking with those who need food, housing, addiction treatment and vital supports in low income neighbourhoods Region-wide. To learn more specifically about the ShelterCare model, visit www.houseoffriendship.org/sheltercare.

I would like to talk to someone about my concerns. Who should I contact?

Gail Martin, Marketing and Communications Specialist, is available at 519-742-8327 x 132 or GailM@houseoffriendship.org. She will direct your comment or question to the appropriate person for a quick response.