

SEVERE WEATHER activation plan



SWAP PILOT PROGRAM 2020 REPORT

OVERVIEW

The Severe Weather Activation Plan (SWAP) pilot program was approved by Adams County Board of County Commissioners in December 2019. Partners including ACCESS Housing, Almost Home, Cold Weather Care, and Adams County Community Safety & Well-Being (CSWB) launched in early February. The program activated when weather conditions reached 32°F and below and wet, as well as 20°F and below and dry. Here are a few results from the pilot program:

From February 2020 to April 2020, there were...

33
Activated Nights

88
Vouchers Provided

70
Unique Households Served
54% of total households

Of those that accessed swap services...

67%
Households with last permanent residency in Adams County

65%
Households without a working vehicle

45%
Households reported living with a disability

The night prior, Households slept...



Reasons for not accessing another shelter



Top reasons for becoming homeless include:

- Family/relationship breakup
- Fleeing domestic violence
- Eviction
- Criminal justice related causes
- Unemployed/barriers to securing employment

FEEDBACK

The following section reveals feedback and suggestions from the program participants, partnering hotels, and community partners. All surveys were created and distributed after the SWAP season closed for the season (April 30, 2020).

Client Feedback

Program participants who completed the SWAP Satisfaction Survey (n= 6) stated they received the following services:

- A warm place to stay during severe weather
- Cold weather gear
- Hygiene supplies
- Food
- Bus passes/transportation resources
- Gift cards
- Case management
- Referrals to additional services

Program participants also stated that they were satisfied with the services received, that the hotel/motel was safe and clean, that SWAP staff were respectful, resourceful, and helpful, that the hygiene kits and cold weather gear were helpful, and the locations at the Adams County Human Services Center and Almost Home were convenient.

Program participants heard about SWAP, primarily through outreach as well as an agency referral, and from a friend or family member who recommended it. When asked if their situation improved or changed because of SWAP, participants shared that they moved into their own apartment, reconnected with their support network, stayed with friends/family, identified barriers to obtaining housing, moved into emergency shelter, and in two participants indented as still experiencing homelessness.

In further comments, participants shared how helpful SWAP staff were, in which staff were non-judgmental, and expressed gratitude for a service provided to people experiencing homelessness in Adams County (they explained that services in neighboring counties require residency in said county).

Hotel Feedback

SWAP worked with 5 hotels (2 out of the 5 partnering hotels frequently sheltered families and individuals during SWAP) and received feedback from 2 partnering hotels. The partnering hotels shared that they experienced minor challenges during the season (for instance, program participants would show up prior to the reservation being called in), and when asked about improvements they would like to see in future seasons, they shared they would like to have a better way to communicate with SWAP staff and an incidental protocol in place in the chance there is damage to the hotel property.

Ultimately, both hotels agreed that they would recommend the SWAP program to any other hotel/motel owners or managers in the future.

Community Partner Feedback

A brief survey was sent to the Adams County Coalition for the Homeless (ACCH) to gather

input from community partners who received notifications and referred people experiencing homelessness to SWAP during activation. Of the ACCH community partners that completed the survey (n=6), the majority of partners heard about SWAP and its activations through the SWAP e-mail notification, ACCH meetings, and the ACCH Website (www.acchonline.com). Partners indicated that they heard about SWAP and its activations from the SWAP flyer, SWAP staff, and from community members.

Community partners expressed an understanding about how to learn if SWAP was activated or not. However, partners mediocrely agreed that SWAP was accessible for clients and referrals, that the activation and referral process was easy, and that SWAP staff were responsive and accessible for questions.

When asked about improvements for seasons to come, community partners noted being able to reply to the e-mail notification with questions to staff would have been helpful, that having more than one location for assessments or a roving staff member would increase access to the program, and perhaps an increasing outreach efforts. Overall, community partners showed appreciation for the SWAP email notifications, the fact that assessments continued even after the lockdown due to COVID-19, and that the SWAP process and staff were helpful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In spring 2020, CSWB, ACCESS Housing, and Almost Home organized and synthesized feedback. CSWB data analyst cleaned and analyzed the intake data and provided valuable details to inform recommendations for future SWAP seasons. In July 2020, partners brainstormed the following recommendations:

Marketing

- Plan ahead and begin marketing the program prior to launching.
- Provide a Q&A session for community partners 1 month before program launch (September).
- Have the navigator meet with partners, PD, municipalities, hospitals, EMTs, etc. prior to season launch.
- Provide partners with business cards and bus tickets/uber vouchers for referrals.
- Wordsmith same language to be shared on acchonline.com, adcogov.org, almosthomeonline.org, and acchouse.org.
- Work with the comms team to design posters for community partners and bus stops.

Hotel Relations

- Meet with partnering hotels prior to season launch and address questions/concerns they may have.
- Set up a seamless billing system.
- Work with partnering hotels to recruit additional hotels to ensure accessibility and proximity to program participants' current location.

Communications

- SWAP Activations will be posted by 10 AM, activation assessments will be provided Noon to 6PM.
- Explore mass text alerts for community partners and people experiencing

homelessness during activations.

- Set up an @adcogov.org specific email for activations, ensuring the navigator has access to the same email for responsive replies to questions and concerns.
- Explore mailchimp and other mass-email platforms. Utilize social media.

Coordinator

- Hire a Spanish speaking full time position with experience in outreach and background in social work, someone who can be relationship-focused and data/reporting-oriented.
- Invite key CSWB members to the interviews.
- Have the navigator be more “up front” with partners, hotels, and people experiencing homelessness, as a spokesperson for the program.
- Coordinate volunteers and donations.
- Create a consistent, regular schedule (work hours 11 A- 7PM) for outreach efforts and coordinate with the Adams County Street Outreach Network.

Outreach

- Increase outreach efforts prior and during program season.
- Strategize targeted outreach to people experiencing unsheltered and/or chronic homelessness.
- Join outreach partners (RJ Toledo with City of Westminster, Heather McClure

with Adams County, the Syringe Access team with TCHD) to help spread the word and coordinate navigation/ services.

- Explore possibilities to deliver services mostly mobile.
- Distribute supplies and resource cards.

Program Structure

- Create a trauma-informed intake form that could be logged into HMIS at a later date.
- All client information should be entered into HMIS for best practices and easy reporting.
- When SWAP is not activated, the navigator is focused on outreach and following up with previous program participants.
- Explore monthly check-ins and reports with the county for funding/quality assurance purposes.
- Have template invoices for increased ease when analyzing cost benefit/ budget.

Data & Funding

- Create trauma-informed intake form that can be adopted as a universal intake form for all homeless services in Adams County.
- Ensure referral information is more specific to better understand how people learn and access SWAP.
- Diversify funding and explore CDBG as

supplemental support.

- Engage local governments to financially support SWAP.

Services

- Increase meals and food in the supply kit.
- Recruit faith-based communities and volunteers to provide meals on a rotational, weekly basis.
- Consider partnering with mobile dentist services, mobile food trucks, laundry trucks during activation.

Location

- Secure one location that is accessible and available during the full season.
- Purchase or provide a storage unit near the activation site for supplies.
- If a brick and mortar location cannot be secured, explore options to set up in a parking lot and/or purchase a bus.

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activation plan



THANK YOU PARTNERS!

