

2025 Winter Warming Center Plan and Funding Partnership Proposal



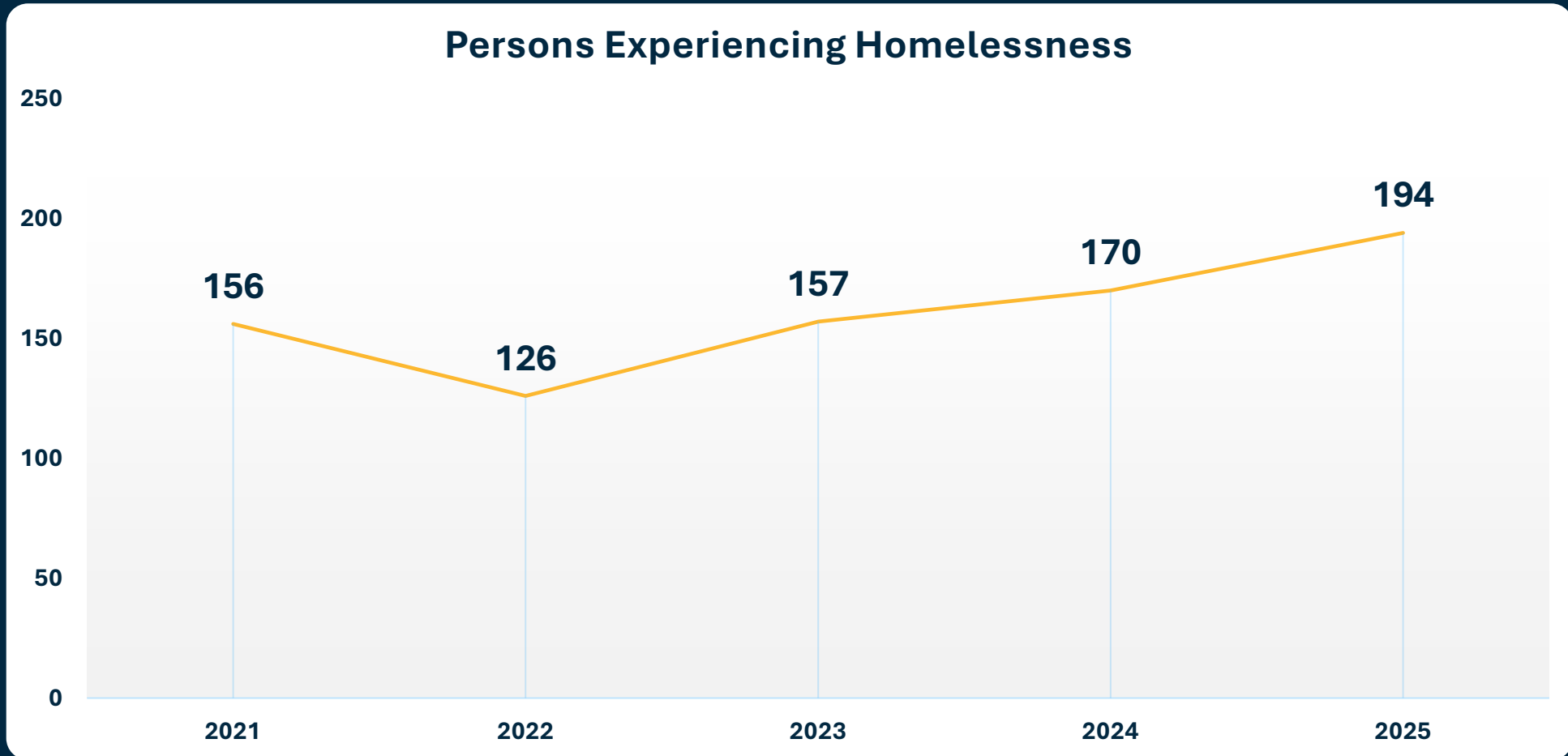


What Is a Warming Center?

Our **warming center** provides short-term, emergency relief from extreme cold for anyone needing a safe, heated space, but it is **not a homeless shelter**.

- Open during extreme weather conditions only.
- Offers safety, warmth, meals, restrooms, and basic support.
- Serves both **residents experiencing homelessness** and **individuals/families temporarily displaced** by power or heat loss.

Vigo County Homelessness (PIT 2021–2025)



Data Source: HMIS Data Portal

Our Primary Partner

For the past several years, **Pathways Day Center**, operated by **Reach Services**, has served as Vigo County's primary warming center.

- Consistently opened during the coldest days of the year.
- Provided life-saving shelter and connections to services.
- Operated each season through informal, ad-hoc support from the City, County, and community partners.



Warming Center Occupancy

Location	Bed Space
Pathways Warming Center	70
Hamilton Center (Secondary Site)	25
Mental Health of America (Secondary Site)	50
The Bridge Church	20
Total Beds Available	165
Total People Experiencing Homelessness (As of Jan '25)	195
Shortfall	~ 30

The shortfall number only accounts for beds for people experiencing homelessness. We know people who are housed may also need to access the warming center in times of power outages.



Why a Formal Plan and Funding Model Now?

While the warming center has been operational for several years, **funding has never been formalized.**

- Each winter, agencies and foundations step in to fill immediate gaps.
- This year, **anticipated cuts to state and federal social service funding** threaten REACH Services' ability to sustain operations.
- A **structured city–county funding model** will ensure consistent, predictable, and equitable support.

Goal: A shared, transparent funding mechanism that guarantees the center can open *when needed* without financial uncertainty.

The Proposed Funding Model

Daily Activation Rate

- After discussions with Reach Services, we are recommending a **daily activation rate of \$1,200** per day of operation.
- This rate covers the staffing costs associated with moving from standard daytime operations to 24-hour coverage, as well as utilities, food, and essential supplies.
- Most other needs, such as meals, clothing, and hygiene supplies, are typically covered through community donations.
- This model ensures funds are only spent when the center is open and serving the public.

How the \$1,200 Daily Rate Is Used

Expense Category	Approximate Allocation	Notes
Staffing & Overtime	~ 85%	Covers overnight shifts and overtime during 24-hour operations
Utilities & Maintenance	~ 10%	Heating, electricity, and facility needs during extended use
Cleaning & Safety	~ 5%	Sanitation, laundry, and basic site safety supplies

Distribution Options and Fiscal Agents

Model	Fiscal Agent	Description
Model 1	City of Terre Haute	County transfers funds to the City. The City manages reimbursements to Reach Services after each verified activation period. Half of any remaining funds are transferred back to the County.
Model 2	Vigo County	City transfers funds to the County. The County manages reimbursements to Reach Services. Half of any remaining funds are transferred back to the City.
Model 3	Wabash Valley Community Foundation (WVCF)	Both City and County transfer funds to WVCF, which acts as the fiscal agent and reimburses Reach Services. Any remaining funds are transferred back to City and County in equal parts.
Model 4	Wabash Valley Community Foundation (WVCF)	Both City and County transfer funds to WVCF, which acts as the fiscal agent and reimburses Reach Services. Any remaining funds are retained to be used for future warming center activations.

Funding Scenarios and Estimated Coverage

Funding Level (Per Entity)	Total Combined Funds (City + County)	Estimated Days of Coverage
\$12,000	\$24,000	20 Days
\$18,000	\$36,000	30 Days
\$24,000	\$48,000	40 Days
\$30,000	\$60,000	50 Days

Activation & Coordination Plan

We are working to formalized an activation protocol to ensure timely, coordinated decisions and clear communication.

Activation authority: City, County, EMA, and Health Department jointly decide when conditions meet activation thresholds.

Unified Command Center: Provides consistent messaging across agencies (press releases, social media, 211, etc.).

Key improvement: Streamlined public communication about:

- When the center is open
- How to access it or get transportation
- Needed donations
- Closure notices



Activation Thresholds

Trigger Type	Previous Criteria	New Proposed Criteria
Temperature-Based	Apparent temperature (wind chill) $\leq 0^{\circ}\text{F}$	Apparent temperature (wind chill) $\leq 5^{\circ}\text{F}$
NWS Alerts		National Weather Service Wind Chill Advisory or Warning for Vigo County
Compounding Conditions		Wet conditions $\leq 32^{\circ}\text{F}$ with wind ≥ 10 mph
Snow Accumulation		Snow depth ≥ 1 " and $\leq 32^{\circ}\text{F}$
Emergency Conditions		Power outage or declared emergency leaving residents without heat
Predicted Number of Days	18 days met conditions 27 days operational	Mean: 35 days Range: 21-49 days Last Winter: 43 days

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Daily Activation
Rate = \$1,200

Funding at any of these levels **may** require our warming center to be supplemented by other organizations.

Funding for 50 days should be sufficient to get them through an entire season.

Based on historical weather data, we predict the warming center will need to open **between 21 and 49 days**.



Why County Support Matters

- When temperatures drop below dangerous levels, every hour can be life or death for someone without heat or shelter.
- Emergency services, hospitals, and law enforcement often absorb the impact when warming centers aren't available.
- A formalized partnership helps prevent crises, reduce strain on emergency systems, and protect community well-being.

The Bigger Picture: Responding to Homelessness in Our Community

- Warming centers **do not end homelessness**. They are emergency responses that keep people alive when conditions are life-threatening.
- But in a community like ours, with a growing number of people experiencing homelessness, they are **essential**.
- The City is committed to finding **long-term solutions** that address the root causes of homelessness. We are planning to launch a **Homelessness Task Force** focused on identifying real, sustainable solutions for Vigo County and Terre Haute.
- Our goal is that, in time, we will need fewer emergency responses and fewer dollars to sustain them because fewer people will be without housing.



Call to Partnership

We are asking the County Council to:

1. Approve a funding contribution of \$12,000, \$18,000, \$24,000, or \$30,000 to match the City's allocation.
2. Support the reimbursement-based funding model at a daily activation rate of \$1,200.
3. Approve one of the four fiscal agent options to guide how funds will be administered.
4. Endorse the formal MOU between the City, County, and Reach Services to clearly outline roles, responsibilities, and communication during activation.

Together, we can ensure no one in Vigo County faces freezing temperatures without a safe place to go.



Questions