



# Memorandum

**TO:** Satpal Sidhu, County Executive  
**FROM:** Erika Lautenbach, Director  
**RE:** Lease for Severe Weather Shelter Space for the 2023-2024 Winter Season  
**DATE:** OCTOBER 23, 2023

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Attached is a contract between Whatcom County and State Street Creamery, LLC for your review and signature.

▪ **Background and Purpose**

Whatcom County Health & Community Services has been tasked with working to create additional shelter options for unhoused community members, when temperatures drop to 28 degrees or below in Bellingham. The Homeless Strategies Workgroup created a set of Guiding Assumptions to activate this additional option, which is what will be used during the 2023-24 winter season.

After the second year of no respondents to a Request for Proposals for community partners and the local faith community to operate a severe weather shelter during the winter season, County staff with Health & Community Services continued planning to operate a space using county staff and resources. There are currently temporary on call staff being hired as well as volunteers being coordinated with the Whatcom Volunteer Center.

One of the larger obstacles has been finding a space to host the shelter. Locating a viable space to host 40-45 individuals when temperatures dropped to life threatening levels, with the option for a short-term lease, and no concern for damages is challenging, but one has been located.

The attached 4.5-month lease is for a space that is close to downtown, on a bus line, has viable heating sources and is available with a short-term rental. Since the space was already planning to be demolished for future building, it is available without a damage deposit and is open to use as a temporary severe weather shelter.

Council is asked to approve the lease and costs associated with this rental. ARPA funds, from the designated homeless services category, are being used for this project.

▪ **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this agreement is not to exceed \$50,000 and is provided by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA – ALN #21.027). Funding is included in the 2023 budget and Council authorization is required for all real property lease agreements.

Please contact Ann Beck, Community Health & Human Services Manager at 360-778-6055 ([ABeck@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:ABeck@co.whatcom.wa.us)) if you have any questions.