



# **Code Blue: Building Disaster Preparedness through Humanitarian Response**

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# Introduction & History

**Code Blue** is a dual-purpose initiative that builds Santa Fe's disaster preparedness capabilities while simultaneously serving vulnerable populations and building community resilience before disasters happen.

**Code Blue** has been in operation every winter since the COVID-19 pandemic. Operations have expanded significantly in that time, owing to annual improvement planning, new resources, and enhanced inter-departmental coordination.

# City of Santa Fe Emergency Management

The City of Santa Fe Office of Emergency Management is the primary coordinator for the novel use of resources during disasters.

**Emergency Management supports but does not supervise incident operations.** It links City departments, community partners, and external resources, and manages the “state of exception” when normal operations are overwhelmed.

# Code Blue Context



## Situation

1332 Cold Exposure Deaths Annually in the United State (FEMA), 70 in NM (NM DOH)



## Risk Factors

Unsheltered individuals at heightened risk due to lack of shelter, medical comorbidities



## Santa Fe-Specific Factors

High-altitude climate with extreme temperature swings, limited shelter capacity, and a diverse vulnerable population

# Program Evolution



## 2019-2020: Implementation

First responder focused tactical response.  
Highly complicated by COVID-19.



## 2021-2025: Expansion

Enhanced intracity and community  
coordination with expanded partner  
network.



## 2025-26: Comprehensive Approach & Training Ground

Training ground for multi-agency  
coordination capabilities, formalized NIMS  
coordination structure, expanded utilization  
of city resources, incorporation of real-time  
data

# Operations Overview



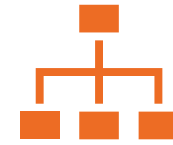
## Activation Criteria

- Temperature below 15°F
- NWS Winter Storm Warning



## Tactical Response Elements

- Proactive outreach
- Shelter operations
  - Transportation
- Resource distribution
  - Data capture



## EOC Incident Support Model

- Strategic Coordination
- Gap Analysis and Resource Sharing
  - Data Analysis
- Situational Awareness Development



## Emergency Management

Policy Development, EOC  
Coordination, Training/Exercise



## Human Services

Policy Development, Provider  
Coordination, Shelter Support



## Fire Department

Outreach, EMS Response, Logistics,  
and Transportation



## Police Department

Security, Logistics



## Park Rangers

Outreach, Transit Coordination



## Transit

Transportation Services To and  
From Participating Facilities

# City Network

City departments work collaboratively to identify hazardous weather, acquire outreach equipment, open and support sheltering facilities, and expand or reposition staffing and resources as appropriate

# Dual-Purpose Training Value

## Fall 2025: Training and Preparation

- Code Blue as a training scenario
- 3 Multi-agency coordination exercises
- EOC Incident Support Model development and validation

## Winter 2025-26: Operations

- Improved activations using trained structure
- Effective multi-agency coordination
- Strong partner engagement
- To-date: No cold weather injuries or deaths on Code Blue nights reported by SFFD, no emergency department surge in patients seeking warmth reported by hospitals.



### **Operational Coordination**

Command structures, resource coordination, information sharing protocols



### **Mass Care and Sheltering**

Shelter operations, resource distribution, vulnerable population services



### **Emergency Public Info**

Multi-channel messaging, media coordination, community engagement



### **Situational Assessment**

Real-time data collection, GIS mapping, common operating picture

# **All-Hazards Applications**

Enhancing these capabilities directly transfers managing to wildfire, flood, public health, and other disaster response scenarios that we may encounter

**BED AVAILABILITY**

Warehouse 21

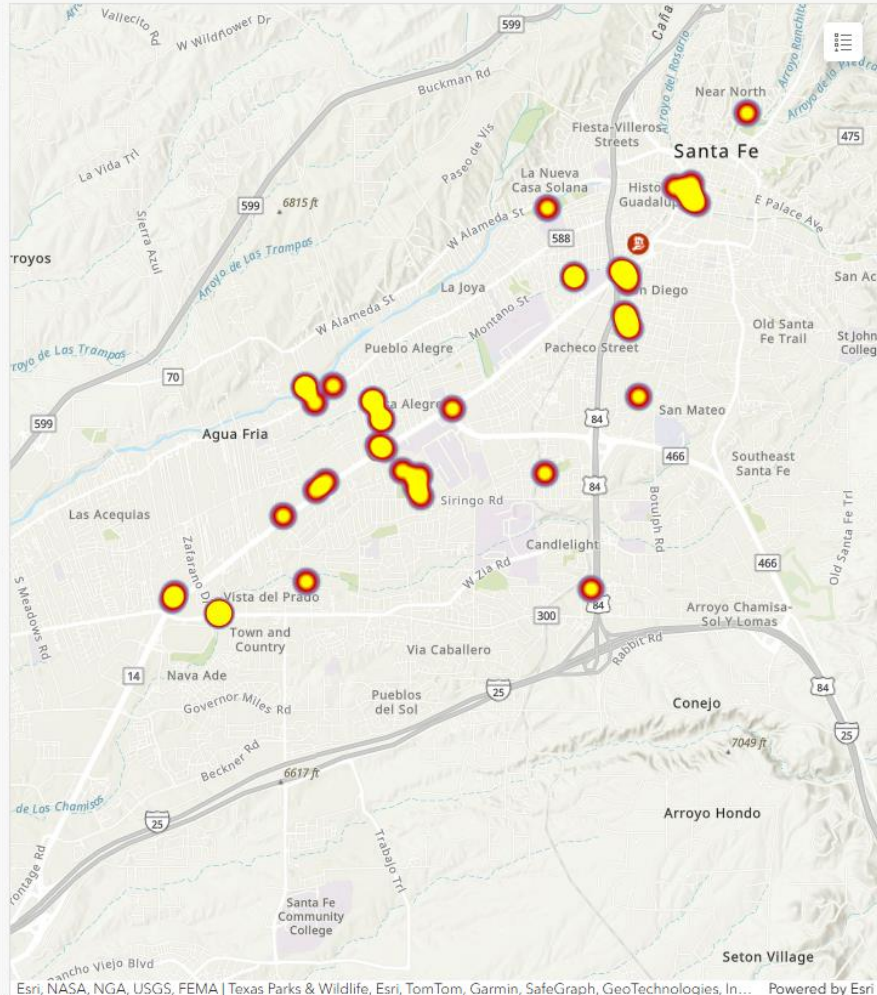
**58**

Beds Available

Agape House

**15**

Beds Available



Outreach Locations

**45**

Kits Distributed

**63**

January 2026 - Current

2026 Outreach Kit Burn Rate

**21%**

A gauge chart showing a progress indicator for the 2026 Outreach Kit Burn Rate. The gauge is a semi-circle with a blue segment representing 21% of the total. The number '21%' is displayed in the center of the gauge.

# Data and Analytics

## ArcGIS Survey and Dashboards

- Current Shelter Occupancy
- Real-Time Outreach Mapping
- Transport Tracking by Agency and Destination
- Equipment Burn Rate Tracking

## Operational Impact

- Ensures Equitable Resource Distribution
- Establish Common Operating Picture
- Drives After-Action Review

# Resilience Investment



## Public Safety Mission

- Reduced cold weather injuries
- Reduced emergency calls
  - Proactive intervention
  - Hospital ED Diversion



## Organizational Capacity

- Increased disaster response training
  - Enhanced coordination
- Increased all-hazards preparedness
  - Efficient use of city resources



## Community Resilience

- Stronger partner network
- Enhanced service coordination
- Vulnerable population support

# City of Santa Fe's Homelessness Team

The City's homelessness team (within Youth & Family Services Division) leads coordination across our social service system, including with contracted agencies and the City's broader network of service providers and partners. We mobilize resources and convene key stakeholders during Code Blue.



# Partner Network

Overnight  
Shelter



Healthcare & Referrals



Community  
Partners



Outreach Teams



Our network of service provider partners includes over 25 agencies and organizations that work on issues of homelessness in Santa Fe.



# Outreach and Access Strategies

## Reducing Barriers

- No cost transportation
- Multiple sheltering options
- Flexible admission policies

## Meeting People Where They Are

- Warm weather kits and supplies
- Multi-agency approach
- Healthcare and CONNECT network coordination

## Trust Building & Trauma-informed Care

- Multi-pronged outreach teams
- Alternative Warming Options
- Healthcare Coordination



# Impact and Accomplishments



## Program Growth

- Increased shelter bed capacity and new locations (3 contracted providers across 2 locations)

## Improved Access

- Low-barrier shelter principles (including allowing pets, possessions, free transportation, hot meals, clothing, etc.)

## Data-Driven Performance

- Introducing new data tracking systems and tools (Survey 123 after action reports, bed tracker, etc.)

## Enhanced Coordination

- Growth in our homelessness response network across partners



# Current Challenges

## Resource and Capacity Constraints

- Limited funding for operations and bed expansion
- Absence of emergency proclamation limits mass care resource activations
- Logistical challenges and training for specialized needs
- **Demand for shelter and support far exceeds true need** (280 shelter beds systemwide, with 546 on by-names list)

# Future Directions

## The Resilience Initiative

- Expand dual-purpose approach to emergency preparedness and human service efforts
- Increase emergency preparedness training and homeless outreach opportunities for city staff and community partners

## Regional Leadership

- Share model with other NM communities
- Develop training materials for replication

## Continuous Improvement

- Align approach with best practice standards
- Integrate lessons learned into regional emergency plans and homelessness / shelter operations



# Thank You

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