



## **PASSAIC COUNTY CODE BLUE ALERT PLAN**

### **I. Introduction.**

The Passaic County Code Blue Alert Plan (hereafter “Plan”) is being approved to ensure that at risk individuals are being protected from weather-related exposure and possible death. The Plan strives to clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of the County of Passaic (hereafter “County”), municipalities and local emergency management coordinators, and non-profit actors in executing and fulfilling the requirements as set forth under N.J.S.A. A:9-43.18, et seq. (hereafter “Code Blue Law”), with the ultimate goal of ensuring that no residents in Passaic County are threatened by weather-related exposure.

### **II. Definitions.**

As used in this Plan:

- (a) “At risk individual” means an individual living outdoors, on the streets, in the parks or in poorly insulated settings, and who is at risk for weather-related exposure and possible death.
- (b) “Board” means the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders.
- (c) “Code Blue Alert” means a designation issued by the Passaic County Director of the Department of Human Services where: (1) the temperatures [that] will reach 25 degrees Fahrenheit or lower without precipitation or 32 degrees or lower with precipitation; or (2) a wind chill temperature of zero degrees Fahrenheit or less for a period of two (2) hours or more.
- (d) “Code Blue Law” means N.J.S.A. A:9-43.18, et seq.
- (e) “Coordinator” means the Passaic County Office of Emergency Management Coordinator appointed pursuant to Section 12 of P.L. 1953, c.438 (C.App.A:9-42.1) by the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders.
- (f) “County” means the County of Passaic.
- (g) “Director” means the Director of the Passaic County Department of Human Services.

- (h) “Plan” means the Passaic County Code Blue Alert Plan.
- (i) “Sheriff’s Office” means the Passaic County Sheriff’s Office.

### **III. Authority.**

The Passaic County Code Blue Alert Plan is being adopted by the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders pursuant to the authority granted to county governing bodies under N.J.S.A. A:9-43.18, *et seq.*

### **IV. Designation of the Human Services Department as the Lead Agency for implementing the Passaic County Code Blue Alert Plan and the Director’s responsibilities in implementing same.**

The Passaic County Department of Human Services is hereby designated as the lead agency in implementing the Code Blue Alert Plan. The Director or the Director’s designee of the Department shall be responsible for the following:

- (a) Ensuring compliance with N.J.S.A. A:9-43.18, *et seq.* and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations related to protecting Passaic County residents who are at risk to weather-related exposure;
- (b) Coordinating with municipal officials and local non-profits in establishing and managing warming shelters where at-risk individuals can be transported during Code Blue Alerts;
- (c) Conducting an Annual Point in Time Count as set forth in Section V of this Plan to determine the number of homeless population of at least ten (10) in each municipality, and coordinating with municipal emergency coordinators;
- (d) In the winter months, monitoring weather reports on a daily basis to determine if a Code Blue Alert is necessary;
- (e) Issuing a Code Blue Alert through multiple channels, including but not limited to email, reverse 911, press release, social media, and any other means necessary to inform the public, and ensuring that all local municipal officials, all County personnel set forth herein with a role in implanting the Plan, and all other non-profit partners operating warming shelters are informed that a Code Blue Alert has been issued and it is no longer safe for individuals to be outside for extended periods of time, as set forth in further detail Section VI;
- (f) Informing the County’s Public Information Officer of the Code Blue Alert Declaration, providing all the applicable information, and ensuring that a press release is issued informing the public of the Code Blue Alert Declaration has been issued;
- (g) Informing the Passaic County Administrator, Passaic County Freeholder Board Director, Chairperson of the Board’s Human Service Committee, the Passaic County Sheriff, the County Emergency Management Coordinator, municipal emergency management coordinators, and all non-profit partners operating warming shelters of the declaration of a Code Blue Alert;
- (h) Coordinating with the Passaic County Sheriff’s Office to ensure that at-risk individuals are transported pursuant to the policies as set forth in Section VIII;

- (i) Issuing a notification ending the Code Blue Declaration after the weather warms to levels outside of the necessary parameters as set forth herein;
- (j) Issuing a status report to the Board after a Code Blue Alert is designated, setting forth the number of warming shelters that were activated, the number of at-risk individuals that were served, the number of at-risk individuals that were transported, and any other pertinent information as determined by the Director; and
- (k) Any other duties or actions necessary to carry out the Plan and ensure compliance of the County of Passaic with the Code Blue law.

#### **V. Annual Point in Time Count.**

At least once a year, the County, under the direction of the Director of the Department of Human Services, shall conduct an Annual Point in Time Count to calculate the number of municipalities in the County with a documented homeless population of at least ten (10) individuals. The Annual Point in Time Count shall be presented to the Board's Human Services Committee and included on an agenda of the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholder's meeting as a received report from the Human Services Department. The Point in Time Count Report shall be posted on the Passaic County website.

#### **VI. Code Blue Alert Declaration.**

If the Director is informed that: (1) the temperatures [that] will reach 25 degrees Fahrenheit or lower without precipitation or 32 degrees or lower with precipitation; or (2) a windfall temperature of zero degrees Fahrenheit or less for a period of two (2) hours or more, a Code Blue Alert Declaration shall be made to all applicable County personnel, local municipal officials, and non-profit partners, triggering the roles and responsibilities as set forth herein to protect at risk individuals and the homeless population in Passaic County.

During the Code Blue Alert, if an individual identifies a homeless person in need of shelter, the following procedure should be followed:

- (a) Contact the Passaic County Sheriff's Office Dispatch at (973) 389-5951 and advise the dispatcher that there is an at-risk individual in need of shelter under the Passaic County Code Blue Alert Plan. This dispatcher or applicable Sheriff's Office personnel shall notify the Director of the Human Services Department, or his/her designee, that an at-risk individual has been identified;
- (b) Thereafter, the Sheriff's Department shall send an officer to attempt to transport the at-risk individual to a designated warming shelter as previously established by the County;
- (c) The at-risk individual should not be transported to the warming shelter until contact is first made with an official from said warming shelter via telephone, and informing them that a person is being transported; and
- (d) If the at-risk individual refused to be housed in a shelter under the Code Blue Alert Plan, the Sheriff's Office and/or local municipality should follow the established policies and procedures for evaluating the individual for additional services.

**VII. Coordination with Municipal Emergency Coordinators.**

The Director or his/her designee shall coordinate with all duly appointed municipal emergency coordinators in the County to ensure cooperation and continuity in implementing the Code Blue Alert Plan.

**VIII. Transportation of At-Risk Individuals.**

Following a Code Blue Alert Declaration by the Director, a notice shall be sent to the designated Passaic County Sheriff's Office officials to inform Sheriff's Office Personnel that any at-risk individuals that are either called in or identified should be transported to the closest warming shelter in proximity to where the person is identified.

**IX. Passaic County Warming Centers.**

The Director of the Department of Human Services shall be responsible for securing non-profit partners to act as warming shelters in the event of a Code Blue Alert Declaration. A master list of the warming shelters should be maintained by the Director, which shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

- (a) The name of the warming shelter;
- (b) A contact person;
- (c) A contact phone number;
- (d) Address of the warming shelter location;
- (e) A description of the site including but not limited to square footage, maximum occupancy, number of restrooms, handicap accessibility; and
- (f) Any other relevant information.

Additionally, the Director or his/her designee, shall present to the Human Services Committee and Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders a Memorandum of Understanding with each non-profit partner outlining procedures for opening and closing the warming shelters, and other responsibilities as necessary to comply with the Code Blue Alert law. The MOU shall be approved in form and legality by the Passaic County Counsel's Office and shall be ratified by the Board and non-profit.

**X. Public Notification.**

The list of Passaic County Warming Shelters shall be maintained by the Department and be updated regularly on the Passaic County website, and distributed as necessary to officials with designated roles under the Plan as set forth herein.

**XI. Review and Revisions.**

The Plan shall be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Director, Coordinator, Passaic County Administrator, Passaic County Sheriff, and Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders as necessary to ensure that all at-risk individuals are being protected from weather exposure during the winter months.