

# Salem's warming shelters in need of volunteers

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Officials with ARCHES anticipate activating Salem's warming shelters for 12 nights straight beginning Tuesday — just two days before Thanksgiving.

KayLynn Gesner, the volunteer outreach coordinator with ARCHES, said it's "pretty likely" they will be activating the shelters each night from Nov. 26 to Dec. 7 based on the current forecast.

Salem could see temperatures overnight in the mid to low 20s for the next week or so. The forecast predicts an overnight low of 20 degrees Thanksgiving night.

## More volunteers needed during holidays

Gesner said she is worried there will not be enough volunteers needed because of Thanksgiving.

"We want people to take care of themselves, and take time with their family," she said. "We just expect we won't have a consistent number of volunteers the whole time."

Salem's four warming shelters need 71 volunteers total to open all locations. Salem First Presbyterian Church, the primary location, needs 24 volunteers and three leads to operate at full capacity.

The shelters scrambled to open early this year because of an unexpected cold snap in October.

They've activated the warming shelters five times so far this season, including Friday night. Gesner said they had to decrease capacity from 86 people to 57 at First Presbyterian because they were running low on volunteers by the third shift.

## Volunteers can train online in about two hours

People interested in volunteering can



The warming shelter at South Salem Friends Church on Oct. 29, 2019, which was the first night this season with overnight temperatures to drop below 32 degrees. PHOTOS BY ANNA REED/STATESMAN JOURNAL

apply and take the training online at [salemwarming.weebly.com/volunteers](http://salemwarming.weebly.com/volunteers). It takes about two hours and can be completed the same day they would like to volunteer. In-person training opportunities are also available.

Gesner said people interested in volunteering for this next activation period should be able to sign up by Sunday morning.

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Ray Martin, 51, is helped by Lindsay Bigelow, a volunteer, at the warming shelter at South Salem Friends Church.