Two Minneapolis homeless shelters to stay open later

Tim Nelson · Mar 6, 2015

Higher Ground combines emergency shelter with permanent housing. Catholic Charities runs the program. Julie Siple | MPR News

Two Minneapolis homeless shelters are expanding their hours to better serve the area's homeless.

An additional $100,000 in funding from Hennepin County is allowing the Higher Ground shelter, run by Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, to stay open an extra three hours every day. The shelter used to close at 7 a.m., forcing out residents as paid staff left for the day. Now the shelter will remain open until 10 a.m.

"So many [people] were coming in late at night, and not being able to get enough sleep," said Jessica Grassie, a program manager at Higher Ground. Some residents who work late-night janitorial and hospitality jobs were only able to get three or four hours of sleep when the shelter closed at 7 a.m., she said.

"They are able to come in and get a good night's sleep, especially for those who work late," Grassie said. "And especially during cold months, to be able to stay in a little longer until it warms up outside has been helpful."

Higher Ground typically hosts about 250 people each night. Simpson Housing Services, a shelter in Minneapolis' Whittier neighborhood that can house 66 people overnight, is also extending its hours.

The Hennepin County Board formally approved financing for the expanded hours this week.

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