



SYSTEM BRIEFING · WINTER 2026-2027

White Flag Winter Shelter

Winter shelter in Durham is a system-wide effort. On White Flag nights, providers across the city open their doors beyond their year-round capacity — at a moment when every organization's staff and resources are thin. The City thanks each of them: meeting this need takes an immense effort, and Durham's providers are making it. This briefing lays out the full winter picture, what's new this year, and how four sprints will convert shelter stays into housing outcomes.

Every door into shelter this winter

OFFERING	WHO IT'S FOR	HOW TO ACCESS
White Flag Hotel Shelter (Open Table Ministry) — every night	Families w/ children, medically vulnerable adults, and single adults	Shelter waitlists and the by-name list — not walk-in; locations shared at referral
Urban Ministries of Durham	Adults only	Coordinated Entry referral; walk-in after 8 PM · 410 Liberty St
Families Moving Forward	Families w/ children	Coordinated Entry — not walk-in · 300 N Queen St
Durham Crisis Response Center	Survivors fleeing DV / SA	Coordinated Entry or DCRC 24-hr helpline (919) 403-6562 — not walk-in · alternate secure location
Durham Rescue Mission	Men / women and children	Walk-in, check-in 5 PM · 1201 E Main St / 507 E Knox St

White Flag nights are called when weather is at or below 32 degrees, or 35 degrees with rain or snow. On those nights, HEART teams may be able transport neighbors to shelter (depending on HEART's availability) and survival kits are available to anyone unable to access it. Entry Point Durham: 984-287-8313.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THIS YEAR'S WHITE FLAG PARTNERS

- ◆ **Open Table Ministry** — operating the expanded hotel shelter and the White Flag triage line, which served neighbors well last season. Stepping into the operator role is no small thing; we are grateful.
- ◆ **Urban Ministries of Durham** — opening 10 additional beds on White Flag nights.
- ◆ **Families Moving Forward** — opening 5 rooms for families on White Flag nights.
- ◆ **Durham Crisis Response Center** — opening 3 rooms for survivors on White Flag nights.
- ◆ **Durham Rescue Mission** — opening their doors to walk-ins every White Flag night.

What’s new this year

This winter, the system adds a hotel-based White Flag shelter, operated by Open Table Ministry, and run it as a launch point for Housing Sprints — the time-bound work that Durham has now demonstrated quickly moves families and singles into housing. The plan at a glance:

ELEMENT	WHAT WE’RE PLANNING
Season	Every night, Nov 1, 2026 – Feb 28, 2027 (120 nights)
Rooms	40 across two City-secured Durham sites — 8 family · 8 medically vulnerable · 24 single-adult
The two sites	Site A: families and medically vulnerable adults · Site B: single adults
Access	Through shelter waitlists and the homelessness system’s by-name list — not walk-in
Stable housing target	70 households (families and singles), appx. 90 to 110 people housed
The bottom line	Safe interim shelter through winter — and a base for Housing Sprints toward permanent housing

Four sprints across two moments

The system will run four Housing Sprints across two distinct periods inside the White Flag season, so the hotel works as a launch point:

SPRINT	WINDOW	ROLE IN THE SEASON	TARGETS
Sprints 1 & 2	Nov 1 – Dec 15, 2026	Opens with the season	30 households across sub-populations Approximately 40 to 50 total people housed
Sprints 3 & 4	Jan 15 – Feb 28, 2027	Carries the season to its close	40 households across sub-populations Approximately 50 to 60 total people housed

The family pathway

Sprints move families out of Families Moving Forward (FMF) and Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD) into permanent housing — and families at the White Flag hotel step forward into the non-congregate spots that open: [White Flag Hotel](#) → [FMF/UMD](#) → [home](#). This flow honors family-specific realities; families at non-congregate shelter often construct their lives (addresses for school, bus drop-off/pick-up, etc.) around their shelter site, so moving families into a hotel from non-congregate family shelter can be especially disruptive.

The single-adult pathway

Single adults move from UMD into the White Flag hotel, then sprint from the hotel into permanent housing: **UMD → White Flag hotel → home**. Each move-in opens a shelter bed behind it, bringing more neighbors inside during the coldest months. This pathway differs from the family pathway and honors experience that has shown it is difficult to move individuals from a non-congregate setting (like a hotel) into a congregate setting (like UMD's singles space).

One system, pointed at one goal

- ◆ Sprint teams embed at the family shelters and hotel sites and drive the sprint milestones — documents, program enrollment, unit identification, application, move-in.
- ◆ The Housing Stabilization Case Management carries households through the twelve-month stabilization arc after move-in.
- ◆ The City's HOPE team convenes case conferencing and provides unsheltered-approach project management; during active sprints, daily case conferencing tracks each neighbor's next step and problem-solves barriers in real-time.
- ◆ The Flexible Housing Assistance Fund moves deposits, application fees, and move-in costs at the speed of opportunity.

WHAT THE SEASON IS FOR

Run this way, White Flag creates space in the system as it fills: every household that moves into housing opens a shelter spot behind it. The aim is a season in which White Flag shelter works as a bridge to stable housing as well as shelter from the cold. This approach represents system-wide alignment with the Strategic Framework, deep collaboration with multiple partners, and a focus on housing outcomes.