

I am a volunteer at SERV-OR through Lane County Public Health Reserve Corps and also an emergency volunteer for an NGO (St. Vincent de Paul's Egan warming center) in Eugene/Springfield. My views are my own and not of SERV-OR/Lane County and not of St Vincent de Paul, the NGO that manages the Egan Warming Center. During the ice storm in January 2024, I volunteered for the warming center before the state of emergency was declared and before the Red Cross shelters were open. I subsequently volunteered at the Red Cross shelter through the MRC during the same storm once a state of emergency was declared and the Red Cross shelters were activated. Normally the warming center functions to provide warmth and shelter to people who are chronically unhoused. However, police dropped off people at the warming center whose homes lost power and heat as they had no place to go. Hotels were full. No libraries were open to huddle at. The buses were not running. In addition, the downtown Eugene PeaceHealth urgent care was not open the first few days of the storm. We cared for all who came in as they were in need. The warming centers are only open during the nighttime, but volunteer leadership at the Springfield warming center decided to stay open during the day so people could continue to get shelter/stay safe from the thick ice and very cold weather. We were short volunteers and resources. For example, porta potties were unable to be emptied due to issues with the weather causing a public health hazard- yet people had no other place to stay and were unable to get services in the initial part of the storm. I strongly support this bill so we have the volunteers and resources needed for potential disasters that can come unexpectedly and before a formal state of emergency is declared. Thank you.