2025 Impact Report

Macomb County Winter Shelter • Mobile Shower Service • Essentials Van • Lil' Pantries

Reporting period: Winter Shelter Season December 29, 2024 – March 29, 2025 and calendar year 2025 mobile services

The headline
6,330 warm bed-nights • 436 neighbors sheltered • 4,067 showers • 6,846 people served through essentials outreach • Thousands of shelf-stable food items provided

A simple idea: show up and serve with love

Most people in our community don't think about the wind-chill when they lay down at night. Our guests do. For them, a bed isn't a comfort. It's a lifeline.

In 2025, donors, volunteers, churches, and community partners helped WAVE Project provide shelter, showers, and essentials with one goal in mind: make sure more neighbors live to see a safer tomorrow.

Executive Summary

This report is designed for board members, individual donors, institutional funders, auditors, and community partners. It pairs program outcomes with financial stewardship and benchmarks from recent state and national datasets.

2025 at a Glance

These numbers tell a simple story: when needs rise and the temperature drops, our community shows up.

Program	2025 Output	What it means
Macomb County Winter Shelter	436 unique guests; 6,330 bed-nights Cost per stay: $18.47	A safe, warm bed, a meal, and basic care on the coldest nights.
Mobile Shower Service	4,067 showers provided	Dignity and readiness for work, appointments, and housing steps.
Essentials Van	6,846 people served 31,460 total items distributed	Warmth and health basics delivered where people already are.
Lil' Pantries	10+ new pantries were added across Macomb and Wayne Counties	Pantries are stocked with ready-to-eat items, and someone eats today.

The Problem We're Solving

Homelessness is rising in many parts of the country, driven by housing costs, low incomes, and gaps in supportive services. In January 2024, HUD reported 771,480 people experiencing homelessness on a single night in the United States, the highest number since HUD began the modern count.

Michigan's statewide reporting shows both progress and pressure. Even when overall counts improve, frequent users and older adults can remain at higher risk without coordinated supports.

Locally, we see the same pressure. During the Macomb County Winter Shelter season, 436 people arrived seeking safety from the cold. When people can't get indoors, they lose sleep, health deteriorates faster, and it gets harder to keep a job, make appointments, or stay connected to family.

Our Plan

We run a simple, coordinated response with four connected services. Each one meets a basic need that helps people take the next step.

- Macomb County Winter Shelter: overnight safety, meals, linens, and basic care through church partnerships.
- Mobile Shower Service: hygienic, private showers that restore dignity and readiness for work and services.
- Essentials Van: on-the-ground outreach with warm clothing and hygiene supplies.
- Lil' Pantries: 12+ small community shelf-stable food pantries offer simple, safe ways to love neighbors who are unhoused or food insecure.

When you fund WAVE Project, you aren't sponsoring a program. You're giving someone the ability to keep going.

Macomb County Winter Shelter Results

Season dates: December 29, 2024 – March 29, 2025.

Across the season, we served 436 unique guests and provided 6,330 bed-nights. Total operating cost was $116,892.50, which equals $18.47 per stay.

Who We Served

Median age	Gender	Veterans	Health insurance
52 (avg 48.98; range 17–78)	74% male; 26% female	9% veterans	71% insured; 29% uninsured

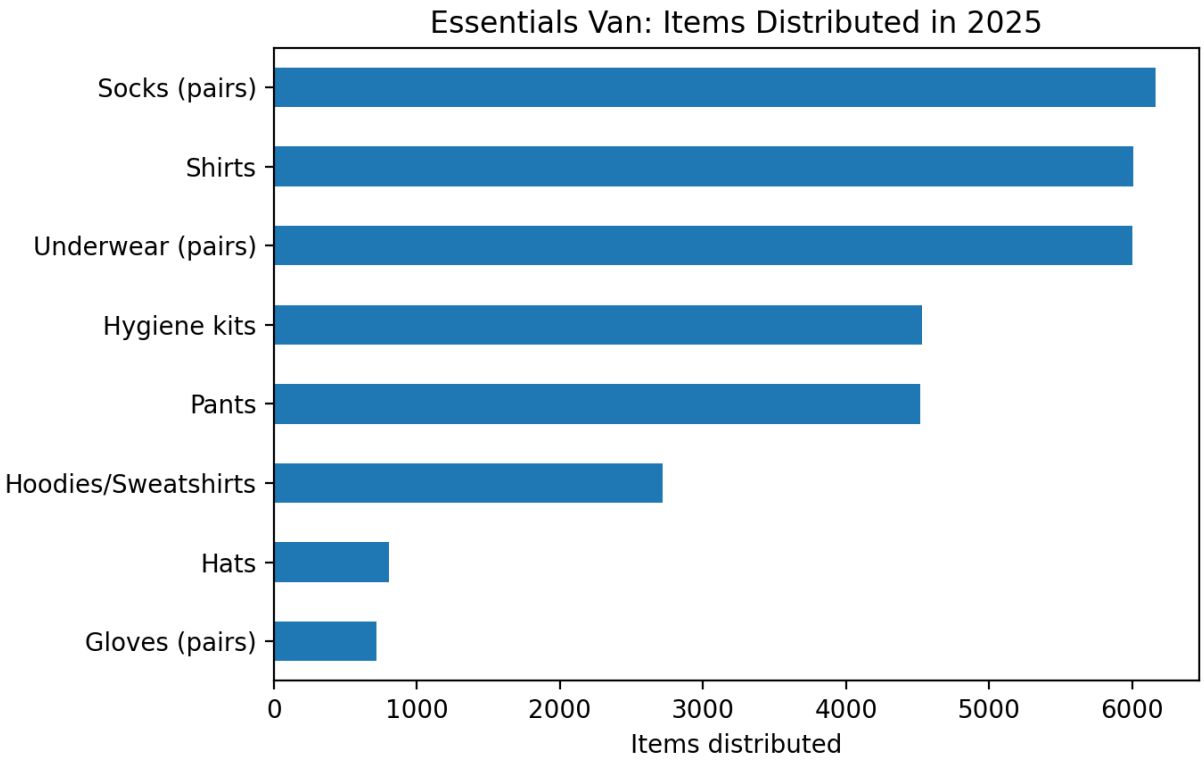
Mobile Shower Service and Essentials Van Results

In 2025, the Mobile Shower Service provided 4,067 showers. Our Essentials Van served 6,846 people across 457 outreach events.

That's about 15.0 people served per outreach event, and 4.6 items per person served.

Essentials Distributed

Item category	Total distributed
Hoodies/Sweatshirts	2,718
Hygiene kits	4,528
Pants	4,521
Shirts	6,008
Socks (pairs)	6,161
Underwear (pairs)	6,003
Gloves (pairs)	719
Hats	802
Total items	**31,460**



Financial Stewardship

Donors deserve to know their gifts are treated with care. We track program costs, compare results to benchmarks, and make improvements when the data tells us to.

Budget overview for 2025 (all WAVE Project programs): planned income of $447,000 and planned expenses of $406,230, for a near break-even plan ($617.50 projected net).

2025 Budgeted Expenses by Program	Amount
Shower Service	$124,081.50
Essentials Van	$86,584.50
Administrative	$78,672.00
Winter Shelter	$116,892.50

How Our Shelter Compares

Benchmarks help donors, boards, and partners interpret impact. Here is how our local results line up with recent state and national reference points.

Metric	MCWS	Recent reference point
Cost per shelter bed-night	$18.47 per stay	MCWS operated below a $25–$30 per-night local benchmark noted in our board/community reporting. Many large systems report far higher per-night costs.
Median age of guests	52 (median)	HUD's AHAR 2024 reports a median age of 52 among people in shelter programs in many communities, matching our local median.
Gender distribution	74% male / 26% female	Shelter populations often skew male, but our local share is higher than many reported systems, which informs targeted outreach.
Veteran share	9% veterans	Michigan's recent statewide reporting shows meaningful veteran homelessness need, pointing to an outreach opportunity locally.
Uninsured share	29% uninsured	Recent shelter health coverage figures often land in the mid-20% uninsured range; our rate reinforces the case for benefits navigation.

What We Learned in 2025

- Lean does not have to mean low-quality. We delivered shelter at a cost per stay that is well below many reported systems, while maintaining safety and consistency.
- Data quality improvements will make our impact easier to understand, especially around county-of-origin reporting.
- Insurance navigation and veteran-specific outreach are two practical levers that could improve downstream outcomes.

If you're looking for a practical way to help, you can underwrite a night of shelter, a shower day, or an Essentials Van stop. Every gift moves the story forward.

Sources and Reference Datasets

- Macomb County Winter Shelter Board and Community Report (Winter Shelter Season 12/29/2024 – 3/29/2025), WAVE Project.
- 2025 Shower Service & Essentials Van Service Data, WAVE Project.
- WAVE Project 2025 Budget Overview (Budget Summary).
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR), Part 1: Point-in-Time Estimates.
- HUD press release: 2024 PIT Count / AHAR summary (Dec 27, 2024).
- Michigan Council to End Homelessness / Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), 2024 Annual Report on Ending Homelessness.
- National Alliance to End Homelessness, Michigan fact sheet based on 2024 HUD PIT data.