



Sobering Center FAQs: Temporary Administration Building Location

What is the Sobering Center?

The Sobering Center serves as a low-barrier, safe place for people to sleep off the acute effects of intoxication and get connected to treatment services, housing assistance and other supports.

King County first opened a Sobering Center in 1997 in South Lake Union, serving the community for decades. But when that facility [closed in 2019](#), the region was left without a dedicated space for this essential service. In response, a temporary Sobering Center was established on Yesler in 2022. Last year, King County purchased a permanent Sobering Center in SODO, which is now undergoing renovations and expected to open in 2027.

Why is King County temporarily moving the Sobering Center to the downtown Administration Building?

The previous Sobering Center, located in the Yesler building, operated on reduced hours and had a restrictive layout. By temporarily moving the center to the Administration Building, operations can eventually be restored to 24/7 — consistent with best practices — allowing the center to reach more people with 40 beds and provide services in a safer, more effective environment for clients and staff.

Is this move permanent?

No. This will only be for approximately 18 months while renovations and modifications are underway at the [permanent SODO site](#), which is expected to open in 2027.

When will it be in use?

The Sobering Center will start welcoming clients July 2026.

What are the hours of operation?

This center will keep its current hours of 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. with a plan to eventually open 24/7.

Where in the Administration Building is the Sobering Center located?



The Sobering Center is located on the south side of the Administration Building's second floor on Jefferson Street. Although it is officially on the second floor, the building sits on a hill, so the main (and only) entrance to the center is at ground level.

King County's Emergency Service Patrol will drop off clients at the main entrance on Jefferson Street. Clients will also be able to walk in.

When and where will drop offs occur?

Drop offs can occur anytime during operating hours. People can be dropped off by the Emergency Service Patrol van, and by walking into the entrance on Jefferson Street. This is the only public entrance to the center.

Will King County staff still be able to cut through the Administration building?

Yes. The tunnels staff use to walk through the building are publicly accessible and will not be impacted. These tunnels, elevators and stairwells have no access to the Sobering Center. Only specific county staff will have the badge access required to enter the center

How many people are staffing the center?

The center will have four to five staff at a time.

Are there limitations regarding what types of substance use disorders the Sobering Center will see?

No. The center can serve people who are medically stable and seeking a safe place while intoxicated from alcohol or a range of other substances.

What is happening with the permanent SODO location?

Last year, King County [purchased a building in Seattle's SODO neighborhood](#) to create a permanent facility. This facility will undergo renovations, in hopes of being ready to open in 2027.

How many people does the Sobering Center serve?

The Sobering Center can serve up to 40 people per night.

What services does/will the Sobering Center provide?

Part of [DCHS' crisis services](#) available to King County residents, the Sobering Center will continue to provide a safe alternative to public spaces for people to sleep off the effects of



acute alcohol or drug intoxication or opiate overdose, while also reducing strain on emergency rooms and jails.

King County's Emergency Service Patrol provides 24/7 triage and transportation services for people who use substances in the downtown Seattle area and can bring individuals needing sobering services to the Administration Building.

Will this move impact current services?

No. Pioneer Human Services, the County's long-time sobering center operator, will continue to provide the essential onsite services.

When will the permanent Sobering Center be opened and where will it be located?

The permanent facility, [located in the SODO neighborhood](#), is undergoing renovations in hopes of being ready to open in 2027.

Will there be contracted security on site?

There will not be contracted security on site, however, Pioneer Human Services staff are trained and can call 911 if necessary. The King County Facilities Management Division also has staff who do walks around the building.

How are you addressing safety concerns?

The Sobering Center addresses safety concerns by giving people who need to sleep off the acute effects of intoxication a place to go. The center also connects people with treatment services, housing assistance, and other supports.