

# Resources for Neighbors

Hosford Abernethy Neighborhood District

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## Introduction

Residents in the Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood District (HAND) have experienced the painful impacts of homelessness in recent years. This impact has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with more and more people living without shelter. The HAND neighborhood association board has compiled a list of resources/web links that neighbors, both housed and un-housed, may find useful in alleviating the burdens homelessness brings. The resources are not exhaustive, but our hope is to provide neighbors as much as assistance as we can to help address this very serious community issue.

## City of Portland

### [Office of Community & Civic Life: Community Safety Program](#)

The goal of the Community Safety program is to make all Portlanders feel safe, connected, and welcomed. The program brings community

members together to work toward the common good by building proactive relationships and creating equitable outcomes for all.

### [Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program](#)

The City's Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (HUCIRP) is responsible for coordinating cleanup, abatement, and removal/storage of personal property from unsanctioned campsites on City and State-owned properties/rights-of-way. HUCIRP also manages the City's One Point of Contact campsite reporting system. HUCIRP develops and implements impact reduction strategies in addition to coordinating services with outside agencies and jurisdictions within the City of Portland.

Core services include:

- Impact Reduction Services
- Campsite Cleanup
- Communication and Transparency

[Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program Strategic Plan 2019-2021](#)

[Homelessness Toolkit](#)

[One Point of Contact Campsite Reporting System](#)

The City of Portland's **One Point of Contact Campsite Reporting System** is the mechanism community members can use to report issues of illegal camping or related garbage within Portland. This [video](#) describes how to use the system to make a report and how the City and Central City Concern's Clean Start Program respond to those reports.

There are two ways to report a campsite using the One Point of Contact Campsite Reporting System. Please use just ONE of the following methods:

1. **PDX Reporter:** <https://pdxreporter.org>.
2. Calling **311**.

### **Portland Street Response**

Portland Street Response assists people experiencing homelessness or low-acuity behavioral health issues. The Portland Street Response is a program of the Portland city government that was begun in February 2021 to offer an alternative to dispatching police officers to certain types of mental health crisis calls made to 911 or the city's non-emergency number at 503-823-3333. The program started as a pilot in Lents, but expanded city-wide on March 28, 2022<sup>1</sup>, with service from 8am to 10pm. PSR is dispatched when a caller reports the following:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.portland.gov/streetresponse/psr-faq> as of July 5, 2022

- A person who is possibly experiencing a mental health crisis; intoxicated and/or drug affected. This person is *either* outdoors or inside of a publicly accessible space such as a business, store, public lobby, etc.
- A person who is outdoors and on the ground, and has not been checked.
- A person who is outdoors and yelling.
- A person who needs a referral for services, but does not have access to a phone line.

The call meets the previous criteria - AND

- There are no weapons seen.
- The person is not in traffic/not obstructing traffic.
- The person is not violent towards others (physically combative, threatening violence, assaulting).
- The person is not suicidal.
- The person is not inside of a private residence.

A study by Portland State University and commissioned by the city to evaluate PSR (released October 5, 2021) concluded that the program was a success during its first six months, and recommended that the PSR be expanded to make its services available throughout the city and during all hours of the day. It also recommended that it increase the kinds of calls that

responders handle, such as the ability to enter private homes and responding to suicide calls.

Sources: <https://www.portland.gov/streetresponse/psr-faq>, Willamette Week article, *House Calls: a Portland program to reduce armed police responses is blocked from expanding - again*, page 9, July 14, 2021, <https://allevents.in/portland/mental-health-first-aid-training-with-portland-street-response/200021321354818>, and [https://www.opb.org/article/2021/10/05/portland-street-response-oregon-911-police-alternative/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=First%20Look%20October%206%202021&utm\\_content=First%20Look%20October%206%202021+CID\\_9fe4d158ba9d7ad08dd47bc8c235c762&utm\\_source=firstlook&utm\\_term=Learn%20more](https://www.opb.org/article/2021/10/05/portland-street-response-oregon-911-police-alternative/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=First%20Look%20October%206%202021&utm_content=First%20Look%20October%206%202021+CID_9fe4d158ba9d7ad08dd47bc8c235c762&utm_source=firstlook&utm_term=Learn%20more)

### **Access and ADA accommodations**

Sometimes campsites obstruct or completely block sidewalks or bike lanes, creating safety hazards for people walking, biking, or taking transit, especially those with mobility issues.

### **Report a non-urgent traffic safety concern**

Investigations by traffic engineers for non-urgent safety concerns related to pedestrians, people biking or taking transit, speeding drivers, speed limits in general, traffic safety around schools, visibility, signage, signal timing. The 823-SAFE team at the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT).

## **Multnomah County**

## [Joint Office of Homeless Services](#)

The Joint Office of Homeless Services was established in 2016 to oversee the delivery of services to people experiencing homelessness in Multnomah County. The office represents a shared commitment between Multnomah County and the City of Portland to make services easier to access for those in need.

The Joint Office of Homeless Services, among other things, administers contracts for services, conducts homeless street counts and one-night shelter counts, manages systems of care, oversees system reporting and evaluation, and writes proposals to and monitors funds issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Continuum of Care program. Please learn more about Portland's community-wide effort to address homelessness, A Home for Everyone, at [ahomeforeveryone.net](http://ahomeforeveryone.net).

## [Multnomah County Shelter and Homeless Services](#)

Shelters usually operate on a first come/first serve basis until they are full. Some have waiting lists.

**Visiting [211info.org](http://211info.org) or calling 211 is the best place to start when seeking shelter resources.** 211 maintains shelter resource lists and can provide you with some information about shelter availability and wait list status. For families with children and women in their 3rd trimester of pregnancy, 211 will take your name and a specialist will

call you within 72 hours to conduct a needs assessment. Individuals assessed to be the most vulnerable are prioritized for placement in shelters. 211 also has an app that contains many community resources, you can download the app for free by searching 211info.

## Other Resources

### [CEIC Enhanced Service District: Central Eastside Together](#)

Central Eastside Industrial District is the national model for a thriving urban industrial district. The Central Eastside's diverse mix of businesses, industries, makers and creatives contributes to an innovative environment that generates quality jobs, promotes a vibrant pedestrian experience and ensures a resilient, welcoming and connected community. Central Eastside Together will foster a safer district, enhance the pedestrian experience, reinforce economic viability and promote Central Eastside's unique identity through innovative and highly-responsive programs.

An Enhanced Services District (ESD) is Portland's name for a tool that business and property owners in a defined commercial area like the Central Eastside can use to fund improvements that go above and beyond normal City services (typically called a business improvement district or BID in other cities). **The ESD is created, funded and controlled by district business and property owners.** The Central Eastside's Enhanced Services District is called Central Eastside Together.

## [Central Eastside Together Resource Guide](#)

### **Street Roots Rose City Resource**

The [Street Roots Rose City Resource](#) (RCR) is a 4"x 4", 104 page guide that is the most comprehensive, updated list of services for people experiencing homelessness and poverty in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties. More than 160,000 guides are published annually by Street Roots and distributed to more than 400 organizations and entities working with people experiencing homelessness and poverty in the Portland region. Until now, the guide has only been available in paper form.

### **Recovery resources**

[Street Roots Rose City Resource - Recovery Services](#)

### **Mental health resources**

[Street Roots Rose City Resource - Counseling and Mediation](#)

### **[Neighbors Helping Neighbors PDX](#)**

About: A small group of Community Volunteers who come together to enhance neighborhood livability and serve as a bridge between neighbors-- housed and unhoused.

Opportunities: Have a question? Want to volunteer or donate?

Individuals can call 971-386-4746; Facebook



([www.facebook.com/NeighborsHelpingNeighborsPDX](https://www.facebook.com/NeighborsHelpingNeighborsPDX)); email  
NeighborsHelp12@comcast.net; or mail 4834 N Lombard, Portland,  
OR 97203.

The following resource materials about **Safe Syringe Disposal** and **Talking with Unsheltered Neighbors** are from [Neighbors Helping Neighbors PDX](#). We are grateful to them for allowing us to use their materials.

## **Neighbors Helping Neighbors PDX**

### **Safe Syringe Disposal**

There are safe ways to dispose of syringes you find on the ground. Sharing injection drug equipment can transmit infections, but there is little risk to someone who is accidentally poked or scratched by a discarded syringe. Below you'll find information on how to pick them up, where to drop them off, and ways to get involved in cleaning up your neighborhood.

#### **Step-by-step guide on how to safely pick up and dispose of syringes**

##### **Step 1: Pick it up**

- Do not try to replace the cap on the needle, snap, break or bend the needle.
- Wear gloves (garden, work or nitrile).
- Use tongs or pliers to pick up syringe with needle facing away from you.

##### **Step 2: Drop it in**

- Use a hard plastic container, such as a sharps container or 20-ounce water or juice bottle with a lid.
- Set the container on the ground
- Drop the syringes in, one at a time, needle point down.

##### **Step 3: Seal it up**

- Close the container tight.
- If you have a piece of tape you can seal the top

- If you have a pen, you can write on the outside, “SHARPS. DO NOT RECYCLE.”

#### **Step 4: Drop it off**

It's **against the law** to throw syringes in the garbage, even if they are in a secure plastic container. Instead, drop the container in a nearby sharps box or take it to a Metro Household Hazardous Waste Facility:

- The Healthy Streets bin on the west side Waterfront Esplanade, under the Burnside Bridge
- The sharps box slot on the side of the storage container under the Steel Bridge
- Metro Central at 6161 NW 61st Ave, Portland (**Metro only accepts sharps containers**)
- Metro South at 2001 Washington St, Oregon City (**Metro only accepts sharps containers**)

For more disposal options, or if you have questions about medical waste disposal, or find an illegal dump on public property, contact Metro at 503-234-3000.

#### **If you are pricked by a needle:**

- **Quickly wash the pricked area with soap and warm water**
- **Go to your nearest urgent care facility for immediate medical attention.**

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors PDX

### Talking with Our Unsheltered Neighbors

When people experiencing homelessness are asked what they want or miss the most, the answer may surprise you. While money is definitely a necessity in helping meet their physical needs, it's their emotional needs that are often neglected, and they miss most that human interaction.

The right words can make a big difference. Greeting someone with a smile and making conversation is a great way to affirm that an unsheltered person is someone with needs for connection and community - just like everyone else.

Take time to reflect for a moment. When you see a homeless person, what do you do?

Most of us tend to have the same response: We avoid eye contact and walk a little faster. You might also ponder the situation: What's his story? How did this happen to her? How long have they lived on the streets? Maybe you even want to help, but are unsure how to start a conversation or are concerned that reaching out may lead to an uncomfortable situation.

The first step is to remember that we all share the same basic needs. Next, recognize that what separates the housed from the unhoused

frequently is due to events which could happen to anyone – circumstances in which options are exhausted and opportunities limited.

While it is true that many people who are houseless may be affected by alcohol and drug addictions or mental health challenges, the following are a few of the many circumstances that frequently lead to a loss of stability, security and belonging that permanent housing provides:

- Loss of a job
- Illness, work injury or disability
- Insufficient fixed income
- Increasing, unaffordable rent
- Impoverishing hourly wages
- Effects of military service
- Divorce
- Unstable relationships
- Domestic violence

It is no wonder that people experiencing homelessness actually need a kind conversation more than many of us; yet they are some of the most ignored and unacknowledged people we encounter daily.

Here are some practical tips on how to make talking with our unsheltered neighbors a bit easier.

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors PDX

### What to Say – 7 Tips for Meeting People Where They Are

#### 1. Acknowledge with a smile and eye contact -

***“Good morning.”***

Or say “hi” or “hello” and acknowledge the person with kindness and respect. Regardless of what your greeting may be, look the person in the eyes when speaking – it makes a real difference!

A housed person almost never looks an unhoused person in the eye. If you just look a person in the eyes and sort of nod, it’s one of the most respectful things you can do.

#### 2. Start a normal conversation -

***“What do you think about those Blazers?”***

***“How about this weather?”***

Athletic events are often shown on televisions in shelters. Talking about sports can be one of the most interesting, neutralizing things. So while the game you’re referencing depends on the season, bringing it up is like talking about the weather — sports is a topic of conversation that you don’t have to be of a certain class to experience. And there is always the weather!

### **3. Offer your first name and a deeper conversation -**

***“My name is .... How are you doing today?”***

Giving your first name demonstrates a willingness to get to know someone better. Follow up with an open-ended question and you give a person the choice either to brush off a deeper conversation or engage in one without judgment or pressure.

Don't be surprised if he/she isn't interested in chatting. He may not want to discuss his personal life with a stranger; you probably feel the same way! If, however, the person is open to talking, this can lead to a real conversation.

The conversation doesn't have to be long; even a short talk may brighten their day and yours. Foremost, keep the interaction upbeat and respectful!

Many who live unsheltered battle the feeling that they're inadequate, invisible or nonexistent to the rest of society. Never underestimate the value of a casual exchange that can satisfy a very human need: social connection.

### **4. Respect personal boundaries -**

***“May I pet your dog?”***

***“Should I stay away from this area?”***

Be respectful of the person's personal living space and belongings as well as companion animals. Always ask if you are unsure if you are intruding or think someone may be uncomfortable with your presence.

## **5. Pay attention to defensive signals –**

***“I’m sorry I made you uncomfortable. I’ll just get on with my work.”***

Some people you meet will be experiencing mental health challenges/crises which are very real to them. If a person becomes agitated when you approach, they may settle if you step back a few paces. Similar “step back” signals are when a person breaks eye contact, moves further from you or doesn't respond to attempts to engage them. The message they are sending is *“you frighten me”* or *“I don't want to talk”*. Respect their choice and move away from them.

## **6. Leave with a positive farewell -**

***“I will keep you in my thoughts.”***

***“Take care until I see you next time.”***

Offering a wish of good will and a parting smile can be a powerful thing to someone who's homeless, lifting their spirits knowing that someone sees and values them as a person.



## **What Not to Say – Hurtful, Unhelpful Comments**

### **1. “Why don’t you get help?”**

This assumes the person hasn’t already tried to get help. It also infers that homelessness is the person’s own fault or a result of his or her own failings.

They may have already tried a dozen different ways to get help, only to hear that they don’t qualify for a specific assistance program. Or they might not be aware of existing resources; you could make a huge difference by pointing them in the right direction.

### **2. “Why don’t you go to a shelter?”**

To some houseless folks, the conditions at some shelters are worse than on the street. Shelters can be loud, dangerous or require quiet times that don’t align with a person’s sleep habits. A person may be fearful that valued possessions may be stolen. Or a shelter will not allow their companion animal to stay with them. For those with mental illness, sleeping outdoors hidden away and isolated from contact with others may be the only way they feel safe.

In addition, Portland has experienced a rapid increase in rents, loss of affordable housing due to gentrification and lack of available beds at shelters—in short Portland is not meeting the shelter needs of the existing and growing homeless population.

### **3. “You don’t seem like you should be homeless.”**

While it may be well-intentioned, a statement like this conveys to the person that, for the most part, you presume the homeless to be smelly or drug addicts or mentally ill.

However we know that the only thing that really connects all people experiencing homelessness is the fact that they’re impoverished and don’t have access to truly affordable housing at the moment.

### **4. “Get a job.”**

Homeless people hear this comment most often. In fact, many homeless people work. A 2002 Urban Institute study showed that about 45% of homeless adults had worked in the past month. Many who experience homelessness were previously living paycheck to paycheck for a long period of time in cities that have few affordable housing options and have been pushed into homelessness by one crisis too many. Once homeless, it's extremely difficult to maintain the sanitation and order in your life required to keep a job.

Many homeless people suffer from mental illness or other conditions that prevent employment. Or they’re on the streets because they once had a job, but suffered an injury that ended their ability to work.