

What to do when you want to help a person

- Get to know the people living on the streets in your area and treat them like any neighbor.
- Encourage/help them call public services like **211** and the **CFTH Housing Hotline: 360-695-9677** (year round).
- Contact the **Coordinated Outreach Team: 360-450-0802** or **outreach@councilforthehomeless.org**. They can come help people connect to services.
- Share the **Council for the Homeless Resource Guide** councilforthehomeless.org/clark-county-resource-guide

Keep in mind




- Clark County's homeless service providers know how to help our unhoused neighbors. It is what they are trained to do. The Coordinated Outreach Teams represent seven agencies working together.
- Many organizations directly help people experiencing homelessness and work to increase affordable housing. Find an organization that you want to support, and ask them what they need.
- Avoid perpetuating stereotypes and myths. People experiencing homelessness are not defined by their housing status. It's often temporary, and it is likely they sought housing and/or shelter and there was none available.
- Advocate within your circle of influence to help make things better for our unhoused neighbors.

Learn more

Attend CFTH community education webinars on homelessness topics councilforthehomeless.org/community-education

Sign up for the CFTH digital newsletter councilforthehomeless.org/newsletter

Follow CFTH on social media

-  facebook.com/CouncilfortheHomeless
-  linkedin.com/company/council-for-the-homeless-of-clark-county-wa
-  instagram.com/council_for_the_homeless

Donate councilforthehomeless.org/donate-online

CLARK COUNTY, WA Community Toolkit on Homelessness

What's Inside:

- ✓ Do's and Don'ts
- ✓ Common Scenarios
- ✓ How to Help



CouncilForTheHomeless.org

The Basics





Do

- Make eye contact and speak kindly. Be respectful. Determine how you want to engage. Your capacity to engage will vary from person to person and based on the situation at-hand.
- Contact the **Coordinated Outreach Team: 360-450-0802** or **outreach@councilforthehomeless.org**. They are trained to do this work and help people get off the streets and into stable housing.
- If someone is being disruptive, homeless or not, de-escalate the situation if you are comfortable doing so or remove yourself from the area if possible.
- If someone is threatening harm to self or others, acting recklessly or violently, or having delusions, call the **Mental Health Crisis Line: 800-626-8137**. You can also call 911.
- Let people know your boundaries on your property. If people are doing something illegal and won't leave, call 911.

Do Not

- Assume anything about the person with whom you are engaging. They may or may not be tired, hungry, happy, sad, dealing with substance use disorder, facing a mental or physical crisis, or any number of scenarios.
- Enter into a situation you sense is out of your scope as a community member.
- Offer food, use of your phone, or money, unless you are equipped and willing to handle repeat requests.
- Permit anyone to camp on your property, unless you have developed a trusting relationship with them.
- Permit anyone to store personal belongings on your property.

Quick Connect: Who to Call

-  **800-626-8137: Mental Health Crisis Line** for people who are in mental health crisis and do not pose imminent threat to themselves or others.
-  **360-695-9677: CFTH Housing Hotline** for anyone in need of services like emergency shelter serving Vancouver and Clark County.
-  **360-487-8626: City of Vancouver Homeless Assistance and Resources Team (HART)** serving Vancouver city limits.
-  **911:** For people who are in medical distress or in a mental health crisis and pose an imminent threat to themselves or others.

Here's what to do if:

Someone is sleeping/loitering at your front door:

- It is good to establish a cordial relationship. Introduce yourself. Ask the person their name.
- Politely ask them to leave using sincere empathetic language that deflects the request from yourself to a third party (e.g. the property owner asks them to leave, even if that person is you). This reduces the power-dynamic, and will help in future interactions.
- Let them know where they **can** be, as opposed to only where they **cannot** be.
- If they are not cooperative, refer to the **Quick Connect: Who to Call** and determine which number is best for the situation. Avoid confrontation and keep a safe distance if you feel threatened in any way.

Someone exhibiting mental health symptoms has walked into the business:

- Exhibiting mental health symptoms does not necessarily lead to dangerous and disruptive behavior. If they purchase something, treat them like any other customer. This sets a great example for your employees and patrons. If they do not make a purchase, let them know the area is for customers, and politely ask them to leave.
- If they are symptomatic and disruptive: Ask them to leave clearly and politely. Your safety, and the safety of your patrons is your priority. If they remain in the facility call the **Mental Health Crisis Line** or appropriate number from the **Quick Connect: Who to Call** list. Based on the situation, you may want to call 911 if the situation feels dangerous.



Be Kind



Advocate



Give Time



Donate