

What discrete steps can any “regular person” take to help those living homeless and to end homelessness?
Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 1.27.23

“I am because we are.”

—*Lived Experience Coalition*

What Can One Person Do Anyway?

- Do networking wherever you are, talk people up at the grocery store and everywhere you are. Share the knowledge you gain from the Coalition meetings. Let people know that help is available, know where to take socks, food, clothes, etc. Be a human network.
- Discussion about need for universal outreach cards that have key phone numbers that will remain reliable over time.
- People are unable to leave tents to get resources because they’re guarding their stuff—what about offering to watch their stuff while they’re away? The problem with this approach is that it requires building a lot of trust.
- Strengthening partnerships so you know where to send people to accommodate the needs.
- Donating, volunteering, either at our agency or another one. Other organizations need volunteers. Educate people about homelessness to help fight the stigmas associated with homelessness that prevent people from being seen and understood.
- Encouraging people to donate to community organizations, and to personally keep a stock of needed items to distribute.
- Conversation about whether there would be public interest in cross-class project that pairs people with homeless folks for cultural and social outings.
- Self-educate. Make a commitment to follow one topic related to the issues of homelessness in our community. Learn how to be an effective volunteer (what items to donate and when, for example). Be a learner about homelessness and how it impacts people and our community.
- Change the narrative about homelessness. I say I am doing a community survey and engage people around various topics. It’s a great way to start a conversation. Urge people to think more deeply and to amplify constructive information about homelessness through their own networks at work or personally. Sign on to support legislation. Push public opinion in a positive direction and help overcome stigma.
- Smooth the path for the people trying to solve problems. Do very small things that feel manageable, like help at an event, or help distribute supplies, etc. You don’t have to do everything, do the one thing you know you can do. Do one small thing well.
- People already doing the work should bring their friends into community and speak with their neighbors.
- New people are great for grunt work, i.e., making the meal, with more experienced people serving the meal. Gives them time to acclimate.

- Listening and talking to homeless, keeping in mind that the person you are interacting with is a human.
- Advocating for policy change when it comes to housing, funding, —turning out for council meetings and other community meetings where decisions about homelessness, housing, and funding are being made. Email officials to advocate. Social media posts to change the narrative.
- Advocate for relaxing zoning restrictions and other regulations that stand in the way of building affordable housing.
- Open up spaces and homes for people to live. We need both indoor shelter and safe ways for people to live outside.
- Support agencies already doing the work, especially churches buying local homes for housing. Encourage churches to do more.
- Promote "Family Practice" policy, based on family housing network model of putting folks in churches.

To-Does and Links

Downtown on the Go Friday Forum "Who Are We Building For" webinar at noon, today, at this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89760477195>

Here is the link for the housing advocate meeting today at 2:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUsdumvrDMtHtSqWteCBB4VIDeAolIRnuCI>

The web page for the Comp Plan to End Homelessness and details can be found here:

<https://www.piercecountywa.gov/7309/Comprehensive-Plan-to-End-Homelessness>

IAB meeting on unified regional approach, Jan 30 3-5 pm.

<https://piercecountywa.zoom.us/j/91084688732> Webinar ID: 910 8468 8732 Join by phone: 253-215-8782 or 877-853-5247 (Toll Free)

For Inclement weather resources:

https://www.cityoftacoma.org/inclement_weather/inclement_weather_resources

Link to city page on encampments:

https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/neighborhood_and_community_services/homelessness_services/encampment_cleanups_and_site_reclamation