

## HOMELESSNESS OVERVIEW

Homelessness is a reality and with this issue comes many questions. Within Downtown on any given night, up to 125 homeless individuals make the streets their home. A lack of affordable housing coupled with unemployment, physical health problems, mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence can lead to episodes of homelessness.

Downtown Indy, Inc., in partnership with the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention (CHIP), works with homeless-serving organizations to move individuals experiencing homelessness into permanent supportive housing and end the cycle of homelessness. The following information can help address some of your concerns and challenges.

## WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE IS:

### SLEEPING/LOITERING AT YOUR FRONT DOOR

1. Politely ask them to leave.
2. If they are not cooperative, tell the individual you are going to call the police, but would rather not. Avoid a confrontation and keep a safe distance if you feel threatened in any way.  
**Call the non-emergency police number at 317.327.3811.**
3. If the individual becomes disruptive or you feel unsafe and you need additional assistance, call 911.
4. If this is a regular occurrence, call a member of the Professional Blended Street Outreach Team focused on Downtown: **317.474.7331 (HIP)** or **317.970.2016 (Horizon House)**.
5. Consider requesting a "Limited Agency Trespass Agreement" from IMPD allowing law enforcement to come on your private property and make a custodial arrest if necessary for a trespassing individual. For more information or to request a Trespass form, call **IMPD Officer Kim Evans** at **317.327.6515** or email [Kimberly.Evans@indy.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Evans@indy.gov).

### SOMEONE HAS WALKED INTO YOUR BUSINESS

1. Ask if you can help them. If they purchase something, treat them like any other customer – this sets a great example for your patrons. If they do not make a purchase, let them know the area is for customers and politely ask them to leave, if you would do the same for a non-paying patron that is not homeless.
2. If they are disruptive, your safety and the safety of your patrons is top priority. Tell them you are calling the police and then **call 911**.
3. Do not offer free food or drink if you would not do so for non-homeless patrons, as it often encourages panhandling or repeat visit for handouts.

### UNATTENDED BELONGINGS

1. Call the Professional Blended Street Outreach Team: **317.474.7331 (HIP)** or **317.970.2016 (Horizon House)** or email PBSO Coordinator: [nicolet@horizonhouse.cc](mailto:nicolet@horizonhouse.cc)
2. If it needs to be removed immediately, **please call 317.327.6506 (IMPD Homeless Unit)**.

### URINATING OR DEFECATING

1. If you witness this, **call 911** for IMPD response to assess the individual's mental health.
2. Make yourself aware of nearby public restrooms and share this knowledge with the individual.
3. Advocate for more public restrooms, which could be beneficial and may alleviate these issues.

### SLEEPING OUTSIDE DURING EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

1. If you are concerned about an individual's health/well-being, **call 911**.
2. For heating and cooling centers during extreme weather, **call 211** for locations.

## BE IN THE KNOW

### PANHANDLING

1. Panhandling is a solicitation made in person where a verbal request for money is made. (When someone is standing/sitting or performing music where a written sign makes the request for a donation, this is passive solicitation, which is protected, free-speech and legal.)
2. Under many conditions, panhandling is also legal in Indianapolis, UNLESS, it is:
  - A) Aggressive, which is defined as:
    - Continued verbalization of request after receiving a “no” response; intentionally blocking an individual from passing; Touching someone while soliciting money; or intimidating someone to be fearful
  - B) Or happens in the following locations:
    - At a bus stop; in any public transportation vehicle or facility; in a parked or stopped vehicle on a public street or alley; at a sidewalk café; within 20 feet in any direction from an ATM or bank entrance
3. If unlawful, call 911.
4. If legal and you do not feel compelled to give, politely say “no” and move on.

### HERE'S HOW TO HELP:

#### DO:

- Politely say “no” and if you feel compelled to give, do so by:
  - A) Donating to Street Reach Indy, which provides funding directly to service providers for life assistance and direct medical care. Use the specially marked parking meters or go online at [www.streetreachindy.org](http://www.streetreachindy.org) or call **317.635.3344**.
  - B) Purchasing IndyGo bus passes that can easily be handed out to those requesting assistance. Go to [www.buy.indygo.net](http://www.buy.indygo.net).
  - C) Supporting Mayor Hogsett’s and Central Indiana Community Foundation’s Housing to Recovery Fund to help sustain permanent supportive housing. Call **317.634.2423 (CICF)**.

#### DON'T:

- Offer food or money. It often encourages panhandling. Call **211** or e-mail: **211connect2help.org** so you'll know the nearest social service organizations equipped to help and provide more comprehensive service beyond a meal.
- Permit camping on your property, unless you have developed a trusting relationship. Some businesses, such as the City Market, have worked closely with their homeless neighbors to develop a partnership.

### RESOURCES

- **Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention** | [www.chipindy.org](http://www.chipindy.org) | 317.630.0853
- **Reuben Engagement Center** | [ww.indycoc.org](http://ww.indycoc.org) | 317.327.8734
- **Horizon House** | [www.horizonhouse.cc](http://www.horizonhouse.cc) | 317.423.8909
- **HealthNet Homeless Initiative Program (HIP)** | [www.indyhealthnet.org](http://www.indyhealthnet.org) | 317.957.2275
- **Street Reach Indy** | [www.streetreachindy.org](http://www.streetreachindy.org) | 317.472.7643
- **IMPD Homeless Unit** | [tabatha.mclemore@indy.gov](mailto:tabatha.mclemore@indy.gov) | 317.327.6506