



CITY OF PORTLAND
RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

Issue 6 | Summer 2019



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JOHS IN THE COMMUNITY

New Navigation Team brings focused, intensive engagement to highest-impact campsites



PORTLAND STREET RESPONSE

An update from Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty's Office



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Developing and implementing impact and harm-reduction strategies



CLEAN START: DEION W.

"CCC is the best program I've ever been through."



Mayor Ted Wheeler

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Dear Portlanders,

The City's budget is more than just a document illustrating an allocation of resources: it's a statement of our values. When you look at our budget this year, you'll see values of inclusion, prosperity for all and equity. You'll see that we are supporting a new model of addressing the humanitarian crisis that is unfolding on our streets. By funding Portland Street Response, we are prioritizing the need to help people struggling with homelessness and who may be experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis.

Portland Street Response is a pilot program that aims to find a more humanitarian and effective way to address the rise in 911 calls related to people experiencing homelessness. We are trying a new and hopefully a more successful way to address these unnecessary emergency calls.

This is just a small glimpse into what the City is doing to tackle some of our community's biggest problems. City staff work on ways to improve community members' lives each and every day, and I am immensely grateful for the support and dedication of all our public servants who perform this hard work.

I look forward to spending this next year strategizing together and continuing to serve you and this community while we work toward a more compassionate, equitable and prosperous future.

CITY OF PORTLAND

RESPONSE TO

HOMELESSNESS

Quarterly Newsletter

Summer 2019

Issue 6

The City of Portland Response to Homelessness includes articles and information from several sources:

Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS)
www.multco.us/joint-office-homeless-services

Multnomah County
www.multco.us

A Home for Everyone
www.ahomeforeveryone.net

Central City Concern (CCC)
www.centralcityconcern.org

City of Portland Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (HUCIRP)
www.portlandoregon.gov/toolkit

Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT)
www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation

Portland Parks & Recreation
www.portlandoregon.gov/parks

This newsletter is intended to help inform community members on the City's response to homelessness and to highlight what the City, County, and their nonprofit partners are doing to promote public health, safety, and livability, and to provide shelter for those experiencing homelessness or living outside.



JOHS IN THE COMMUNITY

New Navigation Team brings focused, intensive engagement – and services connections – to highest-impact campsites

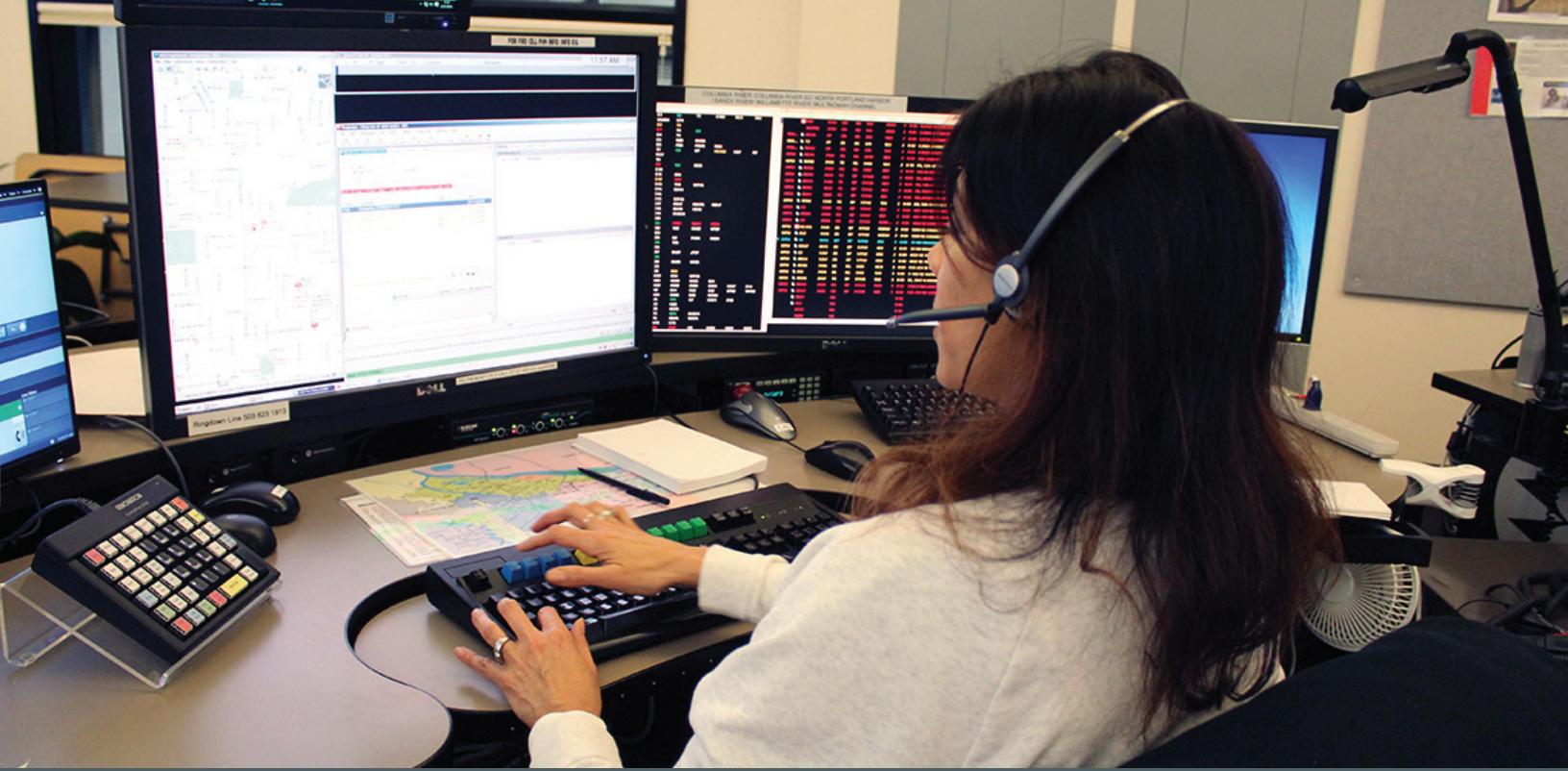
Because of our community's growing gap between housing costs and incomes, Portland has seen an increase in homelessness and housing insecurity. This has led to an increase in visible camping, even though Portland and Multnomah County have doubled the number of shelter beds and housing assistance outcomes since 2015.

Current outreach teams know that many vulnerable people live in these encampments. And as an encampment grows, the potential for health and safety issues affecting campers and neighbors also grows.

That's why the Portland/Multnomah County Joint Office of Homeless Services and two nonprofit service providers, Transition Projects and Central City Concern, launched a new Navigation Team earlier this year.

The team takes a "services first" approach to high-impact campsites. It works over an extended period of time to connect campers to shelter, services, housing, and health supports before a camp is posted for cleaning and removal – rather than continuing the cycle of posting, cleaning, and having a camp return.

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Bureau of Emergency Communications dispatcher Sandi Goss. (Photo by Emily Green)

PORLAND STREET RESPONSE

An Update from Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty's Office

The City is working to change the way it responds to some of its 911 calls. This effort is being led by Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, and its focus is to get the right first responder to the right incident at the right time.

Inspired by the City of Eugene's CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) program, the Portland Street Response program is an answer to the high number of calls emergency dispatchers receive, especially related to the houseless population and people dealing with mental health crises. These calls include "unwanted persons" and welfare checks. The program will pair mental health and medical professionals to respond to low-or no-acuity calls, so that the first people to arrive on site are those best equipped and appropriate for the situation. The vision is a program that focuses on de-escalation, peer support, and call prioritization.

Street Roots, Portland's local newspaper that works with the houseless community, researched and published several pieces about the Portland Street Response as a much-needed and compassionate response to our City's housing and houselessness

crisis. As *The Oregonian* reported, over half of all 911 calls in 2017 were made about houseless individuals. These calls clog up the emergency response system, have little effect on the core issue of houselessness, and further criminalize people for simply existing.

Commissioner Hardesty is currently working with the Mayor's Office to convene a multi-jurisdictional stakeholder group to develop a pilot Portland Street Response program. City, County, local nonprofits, and service providers are researching and developing the pilot.

Recently, local organizations, volunteers, and Portland State University students teamed up to survey houseless folks in the City to hear their experiences with first responders and learn what they would like to see in the pilot program. With the support of Sisters of the Road Cafe and JOIN, Commissioner Hardesty's office also convened two listening sessions with the houseless community to hear their experiences and ideas for the program.

The draft pilot program is anticipated to appear before Council in November 2019.

JOHS IN THE COMMUNITY

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HOW THE TEAM WORKS

"Navigation" From the Streets to Services

The team works with the City of Portland's Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (HUCIRP) and other public agencies to address areas where high-impact camping is frequent. HUCIRP and other public agencies identify the locations where the Navigation Team is most needed.

A multi-disciplinary team of outreach workers assesses each unsheltered person and their needs. The team offers access to services including shelter, health supports (medical, mental health, substance use), transportation assistance, identification and benefits assistance, and housing and rental assistance.

This work requires almost daily engagement and can take up to several weeks. The goal is to give people time to meet with workers and reconnect with and receive services before an encampment is posted/cleaned.

Hygiene Services Also Play an Important Part

To assist the team in its work, the City of Portland may provide hygiene and storage services, including portable toilets and lockers. Those services aren't permanent, and are placed in an area only while the Navigation Team is engaging in providing services.

How Locations Are Chosen

The team works in one area at a time. HUCIRP, which fields and monitors reports of high-impact campsites, identifies those sites. Decisions are guided by data including a camp's size, geographic areas, and health

and safety concerns. Factors also include a site's risk assessment score and whether there's a pattern of re-encampment after cleanup efforts.

What Happens After the Navigation Team Works in an Area?

Sites are posted and then cleaned by HUCIRP. Appropriate measures are taken, as needed, to help prevent high-impact camping from recurring. This might involve ongoing monitoring. Sometimes it means physical measures such as signs or fencing.

To learn more about how Portland and Multnomah County's investments are helping thousands of people end their homelessness, so that they are no longer in encampments or even emergency shelter, go to www.ahomeforeveryone.net.

NAVIGATION TEAM EARLY IMPACT

SITES VISITED:

- East Morrison Bridge
- Peninsula Crossing Trail
- Hwy 405/26 Interchange

OUTCOMES:

- 109 individuals engaged
- 18 people screened and assessed for supportive housing
- Five couples and nine single adults (19 people total) helped into shelter
- 36 people helped to receive IDs
- 20 people helped to receive birth certificates
- 25 signed up for medical insurance under the Oregon Health Plan
- Two provided with eyeglasses
- Three helped into substance abuse treatment
- 14 given housing referrals



THE P.I.E. APPROACH

An Interview with Monika Weitzel

Monika Weitzel is a social worker who is passionate about providing direct support to individuals affected by neurodiversity and helping homeless service organizations improve their neuro-accessibility.

The P.I.E. or “Person-in-Environment” Approach was created to address the clear and immediate need for a more comprehensive response to people experiencing neurodiversity, intellectual disabilities, and mental health issues. Neurodiversity is a perspective that acknowledges the differences that occur in human neurobiology without judgment.

The neurodiverse perspective states that, although some types of neurodiversity occur as a result of injury or illness, other neurological differences can be understood as normal variations in the brain.

Examples of neurodiversity include dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Tourette syndrome, and autism. More recently Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs), developmental disabilities, and intellectual disabilities are also beginning to be understood as expressions of neurodiversity. Monika provides trainings, consultations, and certification

to local nonprofits and businesses on a number of topics related to neurodiversity, including a Neurodiverse Communication Certification program designed specifically for homeless service providers, outreach workers, case managers, and counselors.

Any outreach worker will tell you that in order to be truly effective in connecting with people, you must first work to establish trust. Part of this involves developing an understanding of who you are working with and what types of communication approaches will work best with them.

“My priority during outreach is understanding. If I can get closer to appreciating what the person I’m trying to connect with is experiencing, then I can be more successful in providing them with relevant and effective supports.”

Monika has conducted outreach with a number of local organizations over the past 10 years, and recently she started her own organization, The P.I.E. Approach.

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THE P.I.E. APPROACH

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She says the concept is simple: meet with people where they are, focus on understanding, and remember that to understand a person, you must be aware of their context.

"Be respectful, listen, and take feedback. This type of engagement is participant-led and must be collaborative. Trust does not always happen immediately. Sometimes it happens months later. You really need to follow their lead."

The concept of increased understanding is particularly relevant when it comes to improving our community response to individuals experiencing homelessness who are also engaging in behaviors outside of our commonly accepted social norms (loud vocalizations, intense emotional expressions, responding to unusual perceptions).

When people who function more neurotypically encounter these situations, they may feel anxious or worried by what they are seeing and make judgments based on these feelings as a result.

Sometimes in these circumstances, people focus on removing what they perceive as the cause of anxious feelings, rather than looking at how larger systems and stigmatizations are contributing to what they are witnessing.

“ As a society we make a huge mistake when we fail to show respect and compassion to those who exist outside of our norms. ”

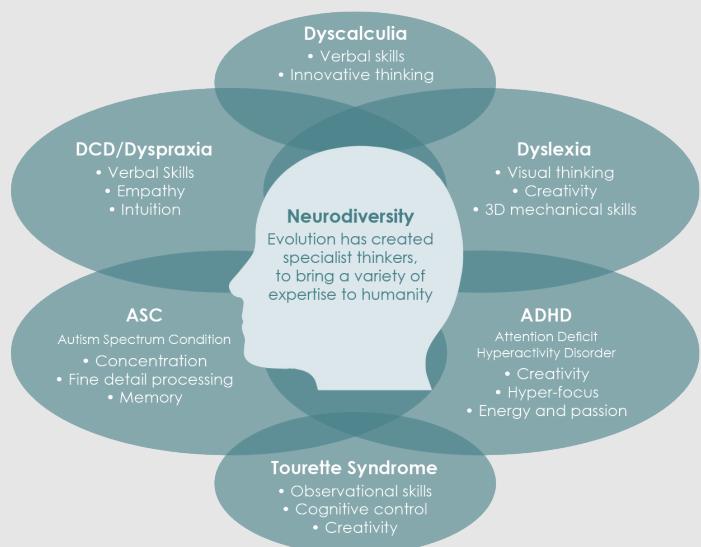
– Monika Weitzel

"As a society we make a huge mistake when we fail to show respect and compassion to those who exist outside of our norms. If we feel distress regarding the number of people without housing in Portland, let's look to the systemic issues that result in insufficient affordable housing and ineffective service delivery rather than punishing those who are actually most profoundly impacted by these systemic failures. Removing a human being and their suffering from your field of vision doesn't resolve the issue."

Monika spends a great deal of time working with individuals who engage in hoarding behaviors and explains that there are many reasons people hoard. "Hoarding is actually very common for individuals impacted by trauma and experiencing houselessness. In response to trauma, one may develop an atypical attachment to items and, in these circumstances, it can be incredibly painful for them to part with their items. Even items that to others appear to be trash."

It is important to remember that people living outside may be in survival mode. Brains in survival mode can't afford to be concerned with garbage. "If you're in a state where basic needs are not met, you literally cannot be concerned with garbage."

In discussing a path forward, Monika goes on to say that, "Individuals experiencing houselessness are often the people with the most insight, creative problem-solving capacity, and effective solutions to our current social issues. They are also the ones who are often the most stigmatized."





Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program

HUCIRP's mission is to work for all Portland community members to reduce the impact of unsanctioned urban camping within the City of Portland through responsive community education, collaboration, coordination with outreach providers, and risk mitigation.



The Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (HUCIRP) is responsible for coordinating cleanup/abatement of unsanctioned campsites on City and ODOT-owned properties and rights-of-way within the City of Portland.

HUCIRP also manages the City's One Point of Contact campsite reporting system. HUCIRP develops and implements harm and impact reduction strategies in addition to coordinating services with other agencies and jurisdictions within the Portland Metro area.

HUCIRP is not designed to solve homelessness. It exists to help reduce the impact of homelessness

within the community by creating service navigation opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness while also facilitating the removal of hazardous items and debris from public spaces.

From April through June 2019, HUCIRP received 11,769 reports from the community about issues surrounding homelessness throughout the city. HUCIRP was able to post and clean 769 campsites during this same time.

To learn more about HUCIRP, or to view their Strategic Plan, please visit: www.portlandoregon.gov/toolkit.

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	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19
Reports Received/Processed	139	3,643	17,293	25,460	35,005
Cleanups Performed	139	139	571	3,122	2,828
Total Cleanup Costs	\$171,113	\$171,082	\$578,992	\$1,576,575	\$2,155,030 ¹
Avg Direct Cost Per Cleanup	\$1,231	\$1,231	\$1,014	\$505	\$762 ¹
Risk Assessments Performed	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,971	4,640
Garbage Collected (tons)	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,301	1,954
Needles Collected	n/a	n/a	8,215	346,793	457,461
Shopping Carts Removed	n/a	n/a	908	5,192	2,997
Drug Paraphernalia Items Collected	n/a	n/a	1,110	5,742	16,212
Human Waste Removed (gallons)	n/a	n/a	n/a	8,400	8,000
Bio-hazards cleaned/removed	n/a	n/a	241	2,099	4,538
Follow-Up Communications with Community	n/a	n/a	1,500	3,210	3,900
Storage Space for Personal Property Storage (sq. ft.)	n/a	n/a	1,000	1,500	5,500

¹Includes costs paid by ODOT.

The above data measures and tracks HUCIRP performance. Prior FY's are included to help compare previous years and to show how the program has grown over the last 4-5 years.

HUCIRP



Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program

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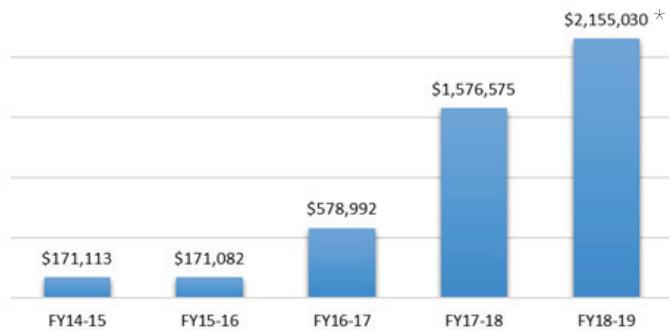


The following graphs show the total direct campsite cleanup costs, the number of campsite cleanups performed each fiscal year, and the average direct total cost per cleanup.

In FY 2018-19, the City entered into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to conduct campsite cleanups on ODOT property within the City of Portland. These costs for cleanup on ODOT property are reflected here but it should be noted that the City of Portland does not pay for cleanups on ODOT property; these cleanups are paid for by ODOT.

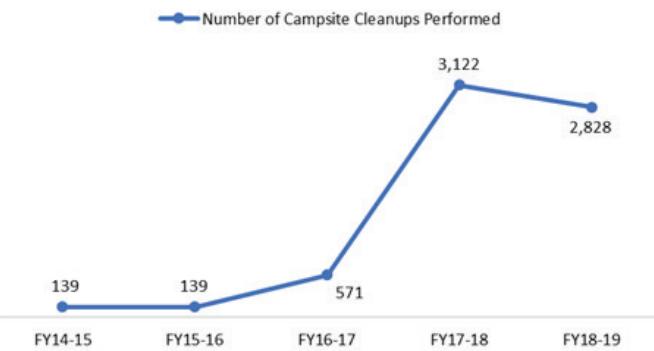


Total Direct Campsite Cleanup Costs



*Includes costs paid by ODOT

Number of Campsite Cleanups Performed



Avg Direct Cost Per Cleanup



*Includes costs paid by ODOT

Has the City tried putting garbage cans down at homeless camps to help address issues of trash?

Yes, we have tried putting garbage cans in various areas of town where camps are located. However, we found that housed community members too often used the cans to dump their own garbage and items. That is not to say that the campers themselves were not using the trash containers but that the housed community also started to illegally dump their items there as well.

There is also a large portion of the community that believes that if we put garbage cans out for campers it might somehow attract more folks to camp in that area. It is important to note that many campers are genuinely trying to keep their areas clean. In fact, many assist in cleanup efforts when cleanup crews arrive.

The One Point of Contact Campsite Reporting System works to address most issues of trash within 12-24 hours. Whenever someone files a campsite report, Clean Start automatically gets notified and is typically the first to respond. They will engage with the folks camping in the area and collect any camper identified garbage.

They will also take pictures of the campsite and send an assessment back to the City about what they picked up and what they found. We then use that assessment to decide whether we will post and fully clean the area. It is important to note that what you and I might view as trash may not be the same for someone living outside. Certain items that appear to be trash may in fact be someone's personal property.

Have questions about what the City is doing specifically in its response to homelessness? Send us an email at reportpdx@portlandoregon.gov, and our team will do our best to provide you with an answer.



QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY



CENTRAL CITY CONCERN CLEAN START

Homeless-to-work program provides opportunities and support.

Central City Concern's (CCC) Clean Start homeless-to-work program offers an opportunity to formerly homeless individuals to become self-sufficient members of the community. The program's primary goal is to help trainees transition to full-time employment.

Often Clean Start's trainees have not worked in many years, and some have never held a job. This program offers a place for trainees to get into a routine and start feeling more comfortable working. Clean Start provides a work environment that is compassionate and understanding of people's backgrounds.

The majority of Clean Start's trainees receive housing during their employment in one of CCC's transitional or permanent housing facilities. Other CCC programs are also available to trainees, including Hooper Detox Center, CCC Recovery Center, Old Town Clinic, and Old Town Recovery Center. Trainees have access to a wide variety of wraparound services.

CCC also provides all Clean Start trainees with access to the Employment Access Center (EAC), which provides case management services for the duration of their employment. Before they are hired, trainees work with an Employment Specialist who assesses an individual's assets and barriers to employment. The assessment could include work experience, education, health, behavioral health, housing, substance abuse, and lack of support systems.

The Employment Specialist meets periodically with trainees to explore career advancement and further education. The Employment Specialist provides individuals with job preparation services, such as résumé writing, interview skills, and placement services.

Day Storage

Central City Concern's Clean Start currently provides day storage for individuals experiencing homelessness. Day storage is open seven days a week, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. The storage container was used 5,473 times during the last three months. An average of 60 people use the storage container each day.

Central City Concern Clean Start Statistics

Central City Concern's Clean Start program provides mobile trash removal services to areas affected by houseless individuals throughout the city. There are six teams, consisting of two members each, providing this service.

Clean Start stats: (4/1/19-6/30/19)

- 410,947 pounds of trash or 205 tons of trash
- 8,552 needles collected
- 2,099 TrackITs completed (TrackIT is the City's reporting tool.)

Clean Start stats: (1/1/19-6/30/19)

- 821,417 pounds of trash or 410 tons of trash
- 19,640 needles collected
- 4,535 TrackITs completed

Clean Start Stats: 2018

- 1,089,303 pounds of trash or 544 tons of trash
- 29,296 needles collected
- 9,530 TrackITs completed



CLEAN START: DEION W.

"CCC is the best program I've ever been through."

Deion W. grew up all over Oregon – literally. At age one, he entered the state foster care system and moved at least 20 times between foster homes, group homes, and residential care. He admits it was tough, but says there was one benefit. "It helped me to adapt to different people's personalities."

Deion left foster care when he was 19 and ended up living under the Burnside Bridge. He told himself, "I'm not living at the bottom of the food chain," and began selling drugs to make money.

He only used marijuana himself, so he didn't experience substance use issues like many of his friends did. However, he experienced mental health issues including post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety.

After three years of living outside, selling drugs and having multiple police encounters, he decided to get help. Multnomah County's Department of Community Justice connected Deion with Central City Concern's (CCC) Housing Rapid Response (HRR) program that helps people transition from living on the street to a supportive housed community.

In 2015, Deion moved into CCC's Golden West Hotel where he learned to develop a daily routine

and follow a schedule. He participated in CCC's Community Volunteer Corps and became a Clean Start trainee. "After coming in off the streets," Deion says, "HRR is a good process. It had a big impact on me."

Deion tried to live on his own for a while, but had some trouble and eventually became homeless again. So he decided to return to the program.

"CCC is the best program I've ever been through," Deion says. "The mental health team at Old Town Clinic is world class." Deion reentered the HRR program and returned to the Golden West Hotel. He quickly got a job on a Clean Start crew.

"They helped me get my driver's license, even paid for the driving test." Now Deion drives around helping clean up the City's streets and talking to the people who live outside. "It keeps me humble," he says. "I definitely don't want to be back there."

Deion currently lives in CCC's Estate Hotel and has a voucher to help him move into his own place. However, he's not sure he's ready to live on his own yet.

"Supportive housing is important," he admits. Deion still hasn't found his own permanent home, but he's feeling more confident every day while he works toward self-sufficiency.



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Help when you need it the most.

Organization

211info

Services

Services include energy assistance, family services, food assistance, health services, housing and shelter information, and information related to severe weather shelters and warming/cooling centers.

CHIERS/Sobering Station

Central City Concern Hooper Inebriate Emergency Response Service (CHIERS) – rather than taking intoxicated people to jail, CHIERS staff operate a van throughout the inner city to transport inebriated individuals to the sobering program. The van is staffed by medical professionals trained to work with people who are intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs and/or alcohol. CHIERS is available from 1:45 PM-11:45PM, 7 days a week. For services outside these times, please call the Portland Police Bureau's non-emergency line at 503-823-3333.

Lines for Life
Military Help Line

Support for service members, veterans, and their families that is independent of any branch of the military or government. Military helpline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Multnomah County
Animal Services

Services include emergency response and rescue, investigations and field services, and animal nuisances.

Contact Information

- Dial 2-1-1
- Text your zip code to 898211
- Email help@211info.org

- 503-238-8132

- 888-457-4838
- Text MIL1 to 839863

- 503-988-7387



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Help when you need it the most.

Organization

Multnomah County
Mental Health and
Addiction Services

Services

24/7 crisis counseling by phone, with translation services for non-English speakers. Treatment for adults and youth for addiction to alcohol, drugs and gambling. Insurance is not necessary.

Contact Information

- 503-988-4888
- Toll-free: 800-716-9769
- Hearing-impaired dial: 7-1-1

National Suicide
Prevention Lifeline

Provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress.

- 1-800-273-8255

Portland Police
Non-Emergency Line

The Non-Emergency Police number is appropriate for situations that are not an immediate threat to life or property. Examples of calls that are appropriate for non-emergency include:

- Your vehicle is missing
- Your ID was stolen
- Your neighbors are playing loud music

- 503-823-3333

Project Respond

Mobile mental health crisis response team
Provides outreach for individuals in crisis-
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- 503-988-4888

Trans Lifeline

Hotline and microgrants organization
offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis.

- 877-565-8860
- www.translifeline.org

Youthline (a service of
Lines for Life)

Free, confidential teen-to-teen crisis and help line. Teen-to-teen support from 4-10PM PST (adults are available by phone at all other times).

- 877-968-8491
- Text teen2teen to 839863
- Oregonyouthline.org



CITY OF PORTLAND RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

The Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (HUCIRP) focuses on coordinated campsite cleanup in compliance with the Anderson Settlement agreement and works to educate the community on the nuances of homelessness. HUCIRP is a division within the Office of Management and Finance.

