



Calgary Homeless  
FOUNDATION

# I am an advocate

**A toolkit for people who care  
about fighting homelessness  
in Calgary**



---

# ADVOCATE

ad·vo·cate

noun

/ˈadvəkət/

a person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy.

No two advocates for homelessness are the same, and it doesn't mean you have to become a weekly volunteer or open your wallet if you don't want to. Your unique time, talents and resources have a place in the solution.

Advocates are found at the dinner table, in schools, at the polling booth, on the way to work and on social media.

In this booklet you will find some helpful statistics and suggestions for ways that you can be an advocate for those experiencing homelessness every day.

# WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

Canadian Homeless Research Definition:

Homelessness describes the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination.

It should be noted that for many people homelessness is not a static state but rather a fluid experience, where one's shelter circumstances and options may shift and change quite dramatically and with frequency. The experience is different for everyone – the only commonality is that people are vulnerable and don't have the income and supports to stay housed.

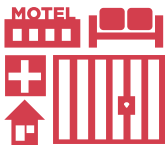
# TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS



**Unsheltered:** absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation (park, vacant buildings, cars, garages, tent).



**Emergency Sheltered:** those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence or disasters.



**Provisionally Accommodated:** temporary accommodation or lacks security of tenure (hospital, jail, couch surfing).



**At Risk of Homelessness:** refers to people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards (sudden unemployment, eviction, violence at home).

# GET THE FACTS\*



According to the 2018 Point-in-Time Count of homelessness, there are **2,911** people in Calgary who are experiencing homelessness **on any given night.**

## Homelessness isn't just what you can see on the street



**2%**

on the streets



**47%**

in shelters



**49%**

in temporary housing or couch surfing



**7%**

systems (healthcare, justice, income supports)



Calgary's Homeless-Serving System of Care works to fight homelessness by **quickly moving people into independent and permanent housing** with additional supports as needed.



For every **\$1** of public spending invested in housing people with supports, there's a **\$1.17 – \$2.84** return on investment within public systems in Calgary

# GET THE FACTS

On the surface, solving homelessness appears simple, but in reality it is a complex problem with many contributing factors:

## External



system  
failures



poverty and  
unemployment



lack of  
affordable  
housing

## Internal



health  
problems



trauma



personal or  
familial crisis



By working together & implementing a housing first approach, homelessness in Calgary has been reduced by **32%** per capita **since 2008**.



There over **100** agencies & programs in Calgary that serve those experiencing homelessness.

\* As of Point-in-Time Count, April 2018

# WHAT TO DO WHEN

## Someone asks for money

*"Sure, here's some change.  
Have a good day!"*



It's your money; it's up to you how you spend it and up to them once it's theirs!



# WHAT TO DO WHEN

## Someone asks for money



*"I can't give you money today, but there's a place that you can visit for support."*

You can tell them about [SORCe](#), which is a referral service at City Hall station. The people there are trained to direct people to all kinds of support services that can help them improve their situation.

# WHAT TO DO WHEN

## Someone asks for money



*"I can't give you money today, but is there something else I can help you with?"*

They might ask you for lunch, or groceries, a hot drink or a pair of mittens. They might not want anything else, but will appreciate that you stopped and asked to help.

# WHAT TO DO WHEN

## Someone asks for money



Just looking someone who is in a vulnerable situation in the eye makes a big difference.

# WHAT TO DO WHEN

## You see someone sleeping outside



*"Hi, someone  
needs help at the  
intersection between ..."*

If they appear peaceful but you still think they need help, you can call the [Alpha House's Encampment Team](#) at 403-805-7388. They will connect them to housing and other resources.

# WHAT TO DO WHEN

A shelter or supportive housing building is being built in your community

*"Hi, I'm X, and I'm interested in knowing more about the people and supports offered to them in this building."*



Introduce yourself to the landlord or service provider. They'll be happy to get to know the community better and try to address any concerns you might have. Ask about the positive impact that housing has on individuals who have previously experienced homelessness.

# WHAT TO DO WHEN

## Someone you know is at risk of becoming homeless

*"I'm here for you and we can figure this out together. Here's a number you can call to find support."*



Direct them to [call 211 Alberta](https://211.alberta.ca) or visit [HelpSeeker.org](https://HelpSeeker.org) for 24/7 information that can be tailored to their situation and needs. Continue to check up on them and support them on their journey to improve their situation.

# WHAT TO DO WHEN

You see disruption because of someone who appears intoxicated



If people are in danger, including the person who seems to be intoxicated, or there is criminal activity going on, [call 911](#) and follow their instructions.

# WHAT TO DO WHEN

You see disruption because of someone who appears intoxicated



If the person seems intoxicated but everyone is safe, call the Alpha House [DOAP Team](tel:403-998-7388) at 403-998-7388. They can connect them to services that help them if they have an addiction or take them somewhere safe.



# RESOURCES

**211:** For information about community or social resources available in Calgary.

**HelpSeeker:** HelpSeeker matches people with the resources and support they need

<https://helpseeker.org/>

**Distress Centre:** The Distress Centre provides 24-hour crisis support in Calgary and Southern Alberta. Call **403-266-HELP (4357)**, or visit [distresscentre.com](https://distresscentre.com) to connect with them in a confidential online chat.

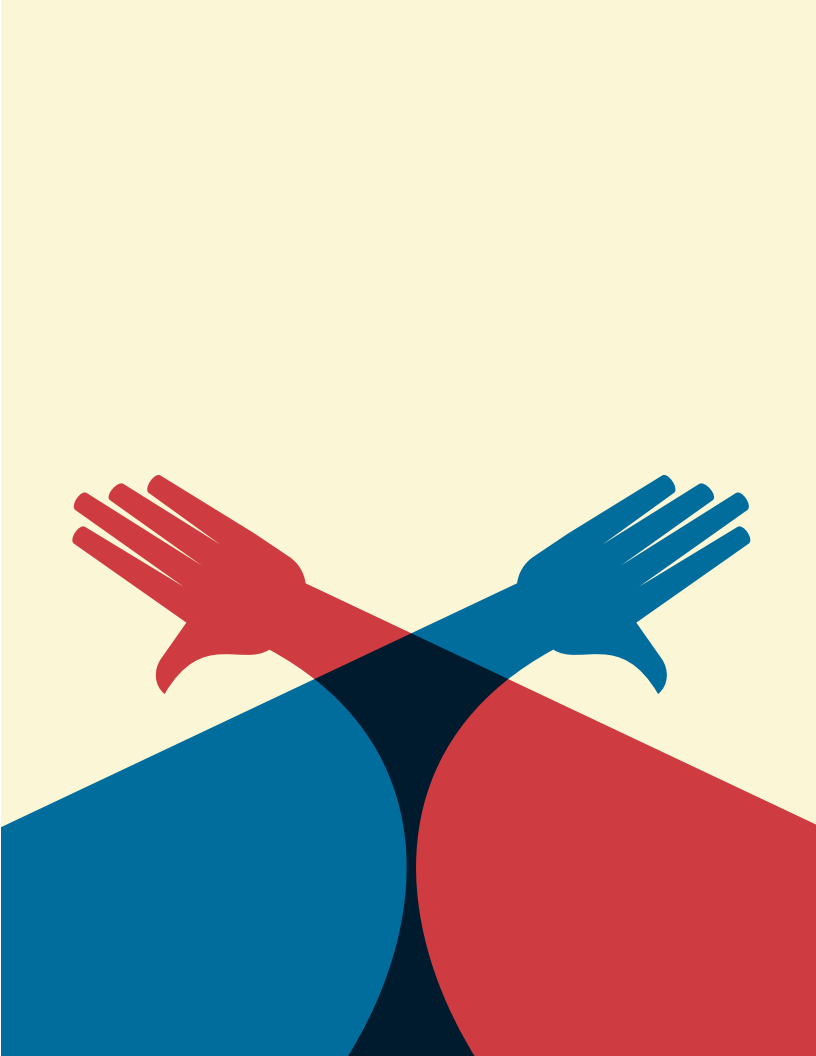
**SORCe:** The Safe Communities Opportunity and Resource Centre (SORCe) is a multi-agency collaborative that connects people experiencing homelessness, or those at imminent risk of homelessness, to programs and services that can help to address the barriers to stable housing.

Visit SORCe at 316 7 Ave SE, Calgary, AB T2G 0J2 (adjacent to the downtown library on the north side of the City Hall C-Train Platform) from 9 AM – 12 PM and 1 PM - 4 PM Monday to Friday, or visit [sorce.ca](https://sorce.ca) for more information.

# WHO WE ARE

Working with homeless-serving agencies and community partners, Calgary Homeless Foundation guides the fight to end homelessness in Calgary. We do that through collaboration and co-creation with all orders of government, public systems, homeless-serving agencies, the private sector, faith-based communities, foundations, and Calgarians. Through agile system coordination aligned with research and data, we find innovative and evidence-based supportive housing solutions for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Our approach ensures that our city's resources are allocated in a cost-effective manner to provide a full spectrum of services, solutions, and homes for all Calgarians.

Our message is simple: together, we will end homelessness in Calgary.





## WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

---

 [calgaryhomeless.com](http://calgaryhomeless.com)

 [@calgaryhomeless](https://www.facebook.com/calgaryhomeless)

 [@calgaryhomeless](https://twitter.com/calgaryhomeless)



Calgary Homeless  
FOUNDATION