

## HOMELESS TOOLKIT FOR LAKEWOOD BUSINESS OWNERS

Homelessness is an extremely complex social problem that impacts the quality of life in our community. There are no easy solutions.

While being homeless is not a crime, many kinds of behaviors can impact the community.

Many recognize that there is a fine line between homelessness as a social issue, and a criminal issue. Many homeless are on the street because of substance abuse, mental illness or both. Local agencies struggle on how to best help the homeless while maintaining the safety of the community.

### What you can do:

- Keep the area in front of your business clean and well maintained. If you keep your property clean, others are more likely to respect it.
- Get to know the Lakewood Police Community Action Team and talk to them about the problems you are having with homeless individuals. Call them at **303-987-7423**. You can also contact the Homeless Navigators directly at **303-987-7773**.
- Remember that as business owners you also have a responsibility to keep your property neat. Allowing someone to camp on or store their belongings on your property can have legal consequences for you through local code enforcement.
- If homeless people are loitering your private property and won't leave, call the non-emergency police number at 303-980-7300. If they are unruly, call 9-1-1.
- Lock or turn off exterior power outlets and water spigots. Keep the landscaping around your business neat and pruned. Don't create spaces that make it easy to hide. Keep dumpsters and trash enclosures secured. Post the property with proper signage such as "No

Trespassing or Loitering". Secure outside storage sheds or containers. Install motion-activated exterior lighting for after hours. Set your wi-fi to "private" or password protect it.

- You may request a Trespass Notice from the Lakewood Police so they can enforce the law on your property after hours, or when you're not there.
- Know local service providers who can provide resources in your area:

**Mean Streets: 1380 Ammons St,  
Phone: (303) 232-2500**

**The Action Center: 8755 W 14th Ave,  
Phone: (303) 237-7704**

**Recovery Works Day Shelter 7011 W. Colfax  
Showers, meals, day shelter, case  
management are available.**

- Refer people to the United Way for up-to-date resources. Just have people call 2-1-1.

### What you shouldn't do:

- Offer food or money. It often encourages panhandling and camping outside your business. Word will spread, and you may have more people asking than you can assist. If you want to help, donate to a local nonprofit that helps the homeless.
- Permit anyone to camp on your property.
- Allow anyone to store shopping carts or personal belongings on your property for any amount of time. Removal of these items and the litter that often comes with it is the responsibility of the property owner which can be costly and time-consuming.

### Private Property Rights

- The private property owner has the right to remove whomever they wish from the property, homeless or not.
- Privately owned businesses have the right to refuse service to whomever they wish, homeless or not.
- Private property owners do not have to store or care for other people's items on their property, whether they are from homeless individuals or not. They can remove these items as they wish.

### Public Property Rights

- All people have the right to access City facilities during business hours, homeless or not.
- All people can rest on streets and sidewalks as long as they are not impeding the right-of-way.
- All people have the right to use City parks during open hours, homeless or not.
- All people have the right to City services, homeless or not.

**The CAT Team** attempts to effect long lasting change on an individual level through building trusting relationships over multiple outreach efforts. We accomplish this through...

- Navigation services
- Mental health support
- Case management
- Connection with resources
- Building relationships with community partners
- Advocacy

### **What does that look like?**

- Daily outreach and referral to services
- Handing out physical resources
- Transitional housing and long-term case management
- Address urgent needs in the field (transports to shelter, medical appointments, etc...)
- Maintenance and follow-up

### **What we can't do...**

- Provide immediate housing.
- Work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Force people into using resources
- Provide financial resources
- Store peoples' items

## When in doubt, call us out.

**General Homeless Navigation Line**  
**303-987-7773**

**CAT team hours**  
**Mon-Fri 7am to 8pm**  
**303-980-7300**

**Employees or citizens wishing to report a camp.... Gogov**  
**Lakewood.org> get involved/stay informed > Request Lakewood> Report a homeless camp**