

SHELTER-FIRST POLICY



UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE

Homelessness continues to be a significant challenge in our region. Astoria, like many communities across Oregon, is experiencing an increased number of individuals facing homelessness. Substance use, mental and behavioral health issues, and limited support services have made managing homelessness more complex. As a result, the City of Astoria recognizes that addressing homelessness requires a coordinated, community-wide approach. In response to this challenge, the City of Astoria will be implementing a Shelter-First Policy.

WHAT IS THE SHELTER-FIRST POLICY?

The Shelter-First Policy prioritizes connecting people experiencing homelessness with available shelter, services, and pathways to permanent housing before camping on public property is considered. The policy balances compassion with the City's responsibility to maintain safe, accessible, and welcoming public spaces.

The Goal of the Shelter-First Policy is to:

- Connect individuals with shelter and supportive services.
- Promote pathways to stability and self-sufficiency.
- Balance compassion with accountability through structured, service-focused enforcement.

The Shelter First-Policy is Built Off of Four Key Components:

HOMELESSNESS LIAISON • Coordinates outreach. • Connects people with shelter and services. • Works with partner agencies. • Provides ongoing reporting.	NEXT STEP INITIATIVE The City of Astoria will establish the following programs to support this policy: • Dry Storage Assistance Program • Community Based Shelter Program
COUNTY-WIDE PARTNERSHIP Homelessness affects the entire region and isn't something that Astoria can manage by itself. The City will work closely with its local partners to coordinate outreach and supportive services.	CAMPING CODE Camping is only permitted when reasonable shelter is unavailable. All camping must comply with the City's time, place, and manner regulations. The City may make reasonable accommodations for special circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

BY EXPANDING SERVICE OPTIONS, STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS, INCREASING OUTREACH, AND ESTABLISHING CLEAR REGULATIONS, THE CITY OF ASTORIA IS TAKING A COMPASSIONATE AND PRATICAL APPROACH TO ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does 'Shelter-First' mean?

Shelter-first means that when a reasonable shelter option is available, individuals will be expected to use that shelter rather than camp on public property. Camping on public property is intended to be a temporary alternative when reasonable shelter resources are unavailable.

What is considered reasonable shelter?

Reasonable alternative shelter may include:

- Emergency shelters
- Transitional housing programs
- Hotel or motel rooms paid for through charitable or government programs

A shelter option is considered reasonable based on the individual's circumstances, including accessibility, safety, and available accommodations.

Are there restrictions on where camping can occur?

Yes. Even when reasonable shelter is unavailable, camping remains prohibited in several locations, including:

- Parks
- Building entrances and exits
- Areas where six feet of sidewalk clearance cannot be maintained
- Public restrooms
- Residentially zoned areas and rights-of-way

What happens if someone refuses available shelter?

A person who has been offered reasonable available shelter and declines that shelter would not be permitted to camp on public property. Violation of this ordinance could result in a citation or an arrest for Trespassing.

What happens if the camping code is violated?

Violations remain municipal violations subject to a maximum fine of \$35. In addition, a person may be trespassed from the area where the violation occurred for up to 72 hours, with exceptions for travel, employment, medical services, legal obligations, religious services, and other constitutional activities.

How can I contact Local Service Providers?

- **Clatsop Behavioral Health:** (503) 325-5722 or go by their office at 115 W. Bond Street
- **Clatsop Community Action:** (503) 325-1400 or visit their office at 364 9th Street
- **The Oregon Suicide and Crisis Line** is available 24 hours a day by dialing 988